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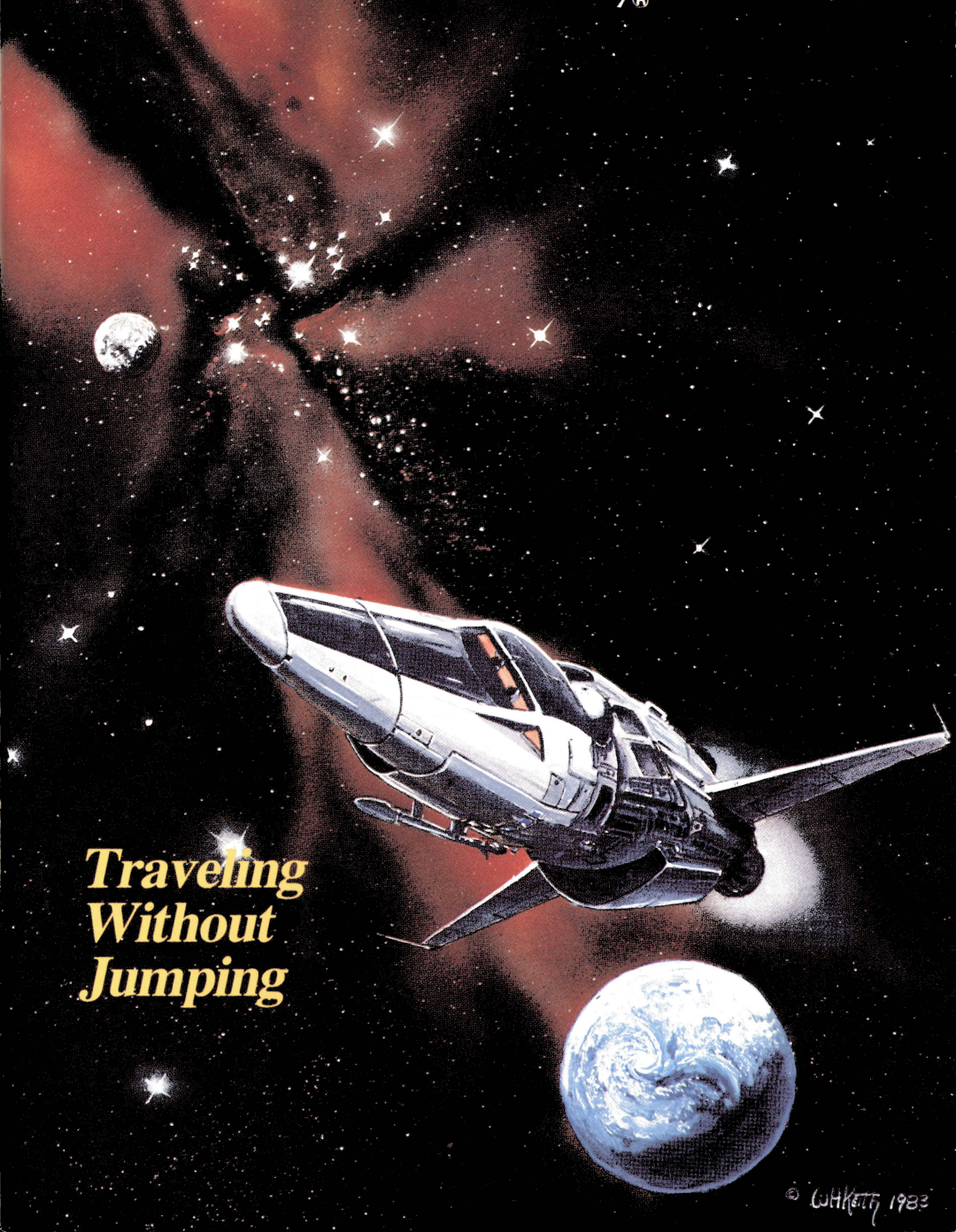

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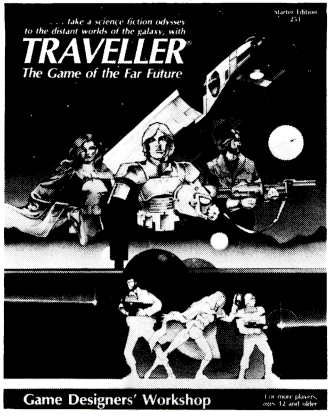
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The *Journal of the Travellers' Aid Society* is Game Designers' Workshop's registered trademark for its science fiction gaming magazine devoted to **Traveller.**

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Dates in this issue of the *Journal* are given in accordance to an arbitrary Imperial calendar of 365 days. The date consists of a three-digit day number (the current day of the year) a dash, and a four digit number (showing the current year since the founding of the Imperium).

The date of this issue is **274-1109**, or the 274th day of the 1109th year of the Imperium.

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Submissions: We welcome articles and illustrations for the *Journal.* Please inquire before submitting manuscripts, enclosing a stamped, self-addressed envelope; we will send manuscript guideline and format sheets.

From the Management

Sometimes, no matter how hard you try, it seems that you just can't win. Here's a recent example from the wonderful world of GDW: Due to a typo, the *Journal's* address was listed incorrectly on the masthead of #16. When #17 rolled around, naturally, I corrected the error, but in correcting it I made another error. I sent postcards to subscribers correcting the mistake, and thought that would be the end of it. A short time ago, the local post office informed us that our zip code was to be changed. The new, accurate, 100% final address (I hope) for the *Journal* is:

Journal of the Travellers' Aid Society
PO Box 1646
Bloomington, Il 61702

On another topic (but still concerning the post office): due to the rising number of non-US subscribers, I am receiving an increasing number of letters (and submissions) from overseas. Quite a few of these people don't understand how to send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to another country. The next paragraph is for for the benefit of the *Journal's* non-US readers (others can skip on to the next one).

When you send a submission to the Journal, I cannot return it to you unless you send an SSAE. There is a problem, however. When a writer in California or New York sends me a stamped envelope, I can simply drop it in the mail, since it has US stamps affixed. However, a writer in Canada, or the UK, or Australia can't usually send me US stamps, since their post office doesn't sell them. Non-US stamps won't work (the post office won't take mail without US postage on it). Some people solve this problem by sending me the envelope without a stamp and ask me to send it back anyway. Some send me coins and ask me to put US postage on the envelope. It's not feasible to change small sums to US currency, and it's a great deal of trouble anyway. (Next time you're in your bank, ask how much it would cost you to exchange US$.20 for your local currency, and you'll see what I mean.) Here's what you do: go to your local post office, and ask them for an *International Reply Coupon* or IRC. It will cost you the same as a regular overseas surface letter. You include this with your self-addressed envelope, I take the coupon to the post office, and they give me one surface letter's postage for it. No hassle, no fees, no problems. If the letter is heavy, or you want to send it airmail, send me several coupons (explain to the postal clerk what you want to do, and they will sell you the right number of coupons). The whole process is not very expensive, doesn't involve a great deal of bother on your end, but it saves me a lot or trouble (and anything that simplifies my life is greatly appreciated. Please note that this does not apply to US APO and FPO addresses (the US Postal Service considers these to be in the United States).

Because issue #16 followed so closely on issue 15, I did not have time to allow a significant number of response forms to arrive before #15 had to go to press. Therefore, two issue's worth will appear instead of one.

The feedback for issue 16 was as follows:

AZ: Day of the Glow	3.7
AZ: Themis	3.5
SuSAG	4.4
Giving . . . Chance	4.3
Languages in **Traveller**	4.0
Merging . . . Systems	3.6
From the Management	3.7
Just Detected	2.9
Traveller News Service	4.0
Casual Encounter: J. McRae	3.7
Contact: The Githiaskio	3.6
The Bestiary	3.7
Issue 16 overall	4.0

The full details of the essay questions are too complex to be gone into here. About 60% of those responding used their own subsector or modified one of the published subsectors (either from GDW or from licensees). Most of the remainder used either the Spinward Marches of Solomani Rim without adaptation.

The most popular character generation systems by a wide margin were *Mercenary, High Guard,* and *Merchant Prince,* all roughly tied for first place, followed closely by *Citizens* and the basic rules system. Great demand was expressed for a Scout service generation system (which will be available before the end of the year).

The feedback for issue 17 was as follows:

Special Supplement:	4.4
Air Strike	3.7
Hunting Bugs	3.3
From The Management	3.4
Just Detected	2.8
Traveller News Service	3.8
Contact: The Jgd-ll-jagd	3.6
The Bestiary	3.7
The Ship's Locker	3.9
Random Notes	4.1
Issue 17 overall	3.9

The questions for issue 17's feedback provoked more comments than any we've had in a while. The readership was divided on the question of a Q&A column (regular or irregular). Most were in favor of the general idea, but there was no clear majority opinion on exactly how to go about implementing the column. About equal numbers wanted rules questions only, both rules questions and background questions, and background questions only. The *rules only* people usually used their own background. Those wanting background only said they had no trouble with the rules that they couldn't handle themselves, but that they needed information on the GDW universe. Those who wanted both generally favored fair play for the users and non-users of GDW's universe.

This issue, there are no regular essay questions. Readers should feel free to sound off on anything that they feel I should know.

— Loren K. Wiseman

Traveller is available overseas through GDW distributors in the UK and Australia. We recommend that our subscribers in these countries obtain copies through their respective distributors.

United Kingdom: Traveller (and its additional booklets, adventures and supplements) is printed under license from GDW by Games Workshop, 27-29 Sunbeam Rd, Park Royal, London NW10. GW import the *Journal* and other GDW products.

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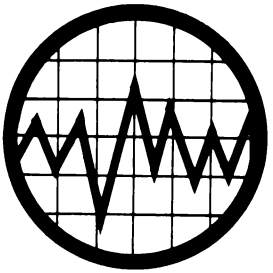

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MAGAZINES

White Dwarf

Issue 45 begins a new Comic Strip, *the Travellers.* Issue 46 contains *Worldly Power: Governments in Traveller.*

Single issues are 75p (US$3.00), write for subscription rates. **UK:** Games Workshop Ltd, 27/29 Sunbeam Rd, London NW 106JP; **USA:** Hobby Game Distributors, 3215 W. Lawrence Ave, Chicago, IL 60625.

Different Worlds

Issue 30 contains a review of *Library Data (N-Z).*

Single issues are $3.00. Subscriptions are $22 for nine issues.

Publisher: Chaosium, Inc., PO Box 6302, Albany, CA 94706.

Space Gamer

Number 65 contains a review of *Nomads of the World Ocean* and FASA's *Adventure Class Ships, volume II.*

Singles issues are $3.00. Subscriptions are $12.00 for 6 issues.

Publisher: Steve Jackson Games, PO Box 18957, Austin, TX 78760.

MINIATURES

Set 1001, Imperial Marines

This is the first set of Grenadier's licensed **Traveller** figures. The box contains 11 marine light infantry in combat armor and a tac missile launcher, in 25mm scale.

Sculptor: Andy Chernak

Manufacturer: Grenadier Models, Inc., PO Box 305, Springfield, PA 19064.

PLAY AIDS

Trader Captains & Merchant Princes

This is the trade, commerce, and high finance module for FASA's *Star Trek* role-playing game.

One 52 page, 8½ × 11'' book.

Design: Guy W. McLimore, Jr, Greg K. Poehlein, David F. Tepool.

Publisher: FASA Corporation, PO Box 6930, Chicago, IL 60608-6930.

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A stiff cardboard screen, imprinted with charts, and an adventure module. For use with TSR's *Star Frontiers.*

One 25½ × 11'' screen and an 8 page 8½ × 11'' booklet.

Design: Mark Acres, Tom Moldvay.

Publisher: TSR Hobbies, Inc, PO Box 756, Lake Geneva, WI 53147.

TRAVELLER NEWS SERVICE

RHYLANOR/RHYLNOR (0306-A434934-F) **Date: 147-1109 (delayed)**

¶ Imperial naval forces and attached army and marine units have retaken Calit (Vilis 0705), according to a highly placed source at the admiralty. News of the victory was delayed because the local commander did not feel he could spare any vessels to carry the news out of system until recently.

¶ No reports of the battle, or of any casualties among the forces involved are available. Ω

LANTH/LANTH (0109-A879533-B) **Date: 241-1109**

¶ The commander of the Imperial 193rd fleet has officially declared the mop-up of Sword World forces in the Lanth system to be completed, after months of heavy fighting.

¶ "Reports of atrocities against the civilian populace are unfounded" the fleet public relations officer declared in a press release, "The enemy forces were too heavily involved in fighting us to be able to have committed any crimes against the locals." The officer went on to note that rumors of atrocities are common after any battle because of the high degree of emotion generated.

¶ No information is available on casualties, either military or civilian, but a highly placed source indicated that the 193rd has requested large numbers of ground reinforcements, indicating heavy casualties, at least in its ground forces. Ω

POROZLO/RHYLANOR (0306-A434934-F) **Date: 231-1109**

¶ According to unofficial reports, a major battle is taking place at Rhylanor, involving both fleet and planetary elements of Imperial and colonial forces. Ω

POROZLO/RHYLANOR (0306-A434934-F) **Date: 239-1109**

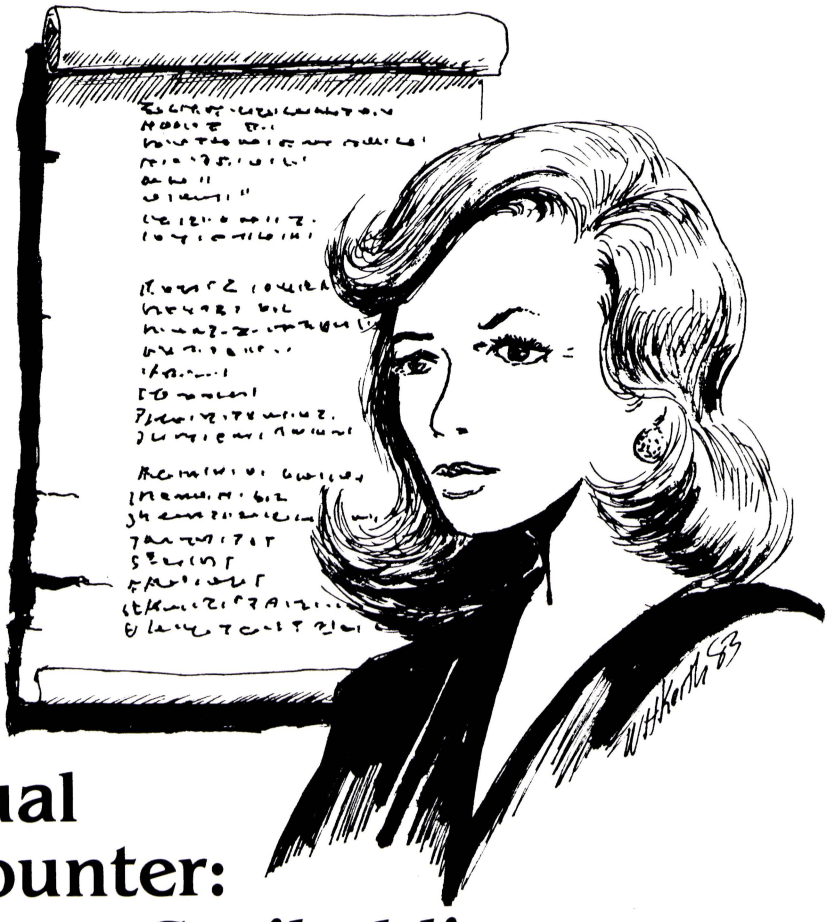
¶ Informed sources have revealed that major fleet and ground elements arrived in this system last night, and are presently refuelling and refitting for immediate transfer to Rhylanor, to reinforce Imperial forces there. Ω

FLASH FLASH FLASH FLASH FLASH FLASH FLASH FLASH FLASH
KINORB/REGINA (0602-A663659-5) **Date: 252-1109**

¶ All Vargr forces allied with the Outworld Coalition have been instructed by their supreme commander to cease hostilities and surrender to the Imperial military or present themselves to a neutral power for internment. Unconfirmed rumor states the Vargr forces have withdrawn from the Coalition, and are now negotiating for a separate peace agreement.

¶ Speculation is rampant in all governmental circles as to the ramifications of this action, both with regard to the war and with regard to post-war politics in the Vargr Extents. Ω

Traveller News Service is another Imperium-wide benefit of membership in the Travellers' Aid Society.



Casual Encounter: *Simone Garibaldi*

Scientist/Rogue

Simoné Garibaldi 796BA7 Age 30 3 terms Cr100,000

Forgery-3, Computer-1, Streetwise-1

A young, but already well-known (in her own field, at least) historian, Simoné Garibaldi graduated with high honors from a prominent Imperial university, taking her doctorate in the field of linguistic archeology. Following her graduation, Simoné did some extremely competent work in the translation of a number of Vilani classics from the early period of the First Imperium (the so-called "Colonial Renaissance" of Vilani culture).

Three years ago, Dr. Garibaldi resigned her university research post and vanished, ostensibly taking a rest from the academic life. She has only recently resurfaced, bringing with her the news of a major new discovery. She claims to have discovered, read, and translated the works of a famous Vilani poet of the Colonial Period, Gaakuuru; no surviving examples of his work (save for a few extracts found in the works of other Vilani writers) were known to exist. He was not well-liked in his own time, and few of his works were published. Garibaldi's

discovery was hailed as a major find, though she gave few details about how the discovery was made or how she happened to be the lucky one to do it.

The quality of the translated manuscripts is excellent; they hold precisely the same power and style of the fragmentary Gaakuuru pieces that can be studied. A number of experts pronounced Garibaldi's find authentic, and three volumes of the translated poems were published almost immediately, and have enjoyed a wide circulation.

Now, however, a few experts have come forward and cast doubt upon Simoné's find. A few slight inconsistencies of style, and the presence of five separate instances where the manuscripts seem to refer to events that occurred or people who became prominent after Gaakuuru's death, have convinced these experts that the Garibaldi manuscripts are forgeries. Substance has been added to these charges by Garibaldi's refusal (based on grounds of delicacy and age) to produce the originals from which she made her translations. Simoné has very suddenly fallen from grace in professional circles; though the controversy has actually helped sales of her "translations."

Dr. Garibaldi can cross the paths of a band of adventurers in many interesting ways. She may hire them to transport her to another star system, or to guard the case which she says contains the precious originals. Another party (a rival scientist, her publisher, etc.) may hire the group to gain some solid evidence that the manuscripts are or are not forgeries. They may be caught in the middle when someone else attempts to obtain proof of forgery through kidnapping, and thus forced to decide whether or not to intervene on one side or the other. Simoné has gained a number of enemies through her apparent criminal activity, some of whom are not very scrupulous in their methods of evening the score.

Simoné is attractive, extremely intelligent, and practical. She is not above using people to get what she wants. In all of her dealings, she insists that the Gaakuuru manuscripts are genuine. Characters will find her to be generally nonviolent, but very persuasive.

The referee should be the final judge as to whether or not Dr. Garibaldi is, indeed, telling the truth. If the material is a hoax, Simoné has turned her talents in Vilani literary history to the production of these forged manuscripts. The forgery skill given for her character above is usable only in production of this sort of material, not for more ordinary tasks.

If, on the other hand, the referee wants to have Simoné be innocent of the hoax, change the forgery skill to some other type of skill, such as computer, admin, etc. In this case, if the adventurers help her out of some tight spot, she may hire the party to accompany her on a journey to help her recover proof of her claims. She will explain that she discovered the Gaakuuru manuscripts by accident, during a visit to an old Vilani colony world that had fallen into barbarism. The writings were contained in an ancient, well-preserved colonial library which has now become the seat of a powerful local religion. During her three-year retirement, Garibaldi followed up leads that brought her to the world.

Simoné has a photographic memory. However, she is very sensitive about her talent (and very much afraid that people will put her success down to a freakish ability rather than to her own intelligence), and has refused to explain her activities to her critics. Now, with trouble closing in from all sides, she wants to recover some or all of the manuscripts. This would make a good basis for an adventure.

— J. Andrew Keith

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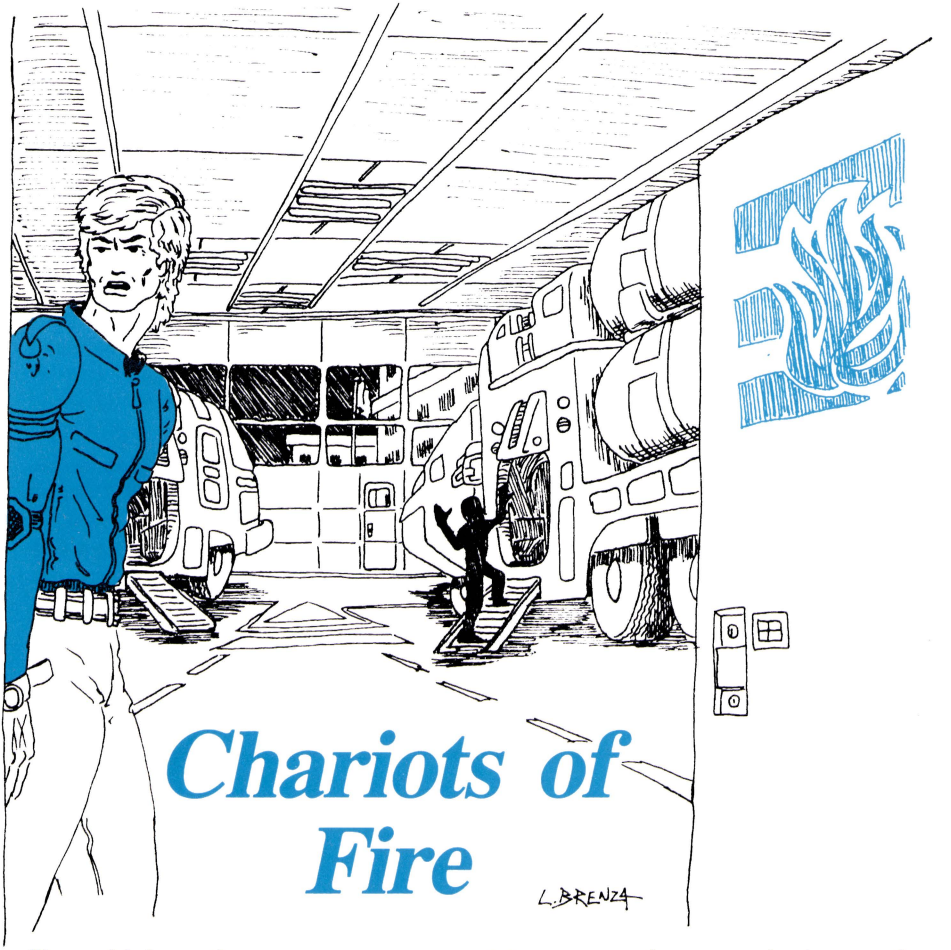

Chariots of Fire

Amber Zone

Players' Information:

Castica and Handor are two small countries on the balkanized world of Gatina (C-765876-7). Both have about 250,000 inhabitants, law level 6, and tech level 6. Both border on and are economically dwarfed by Arnit, a larger nation which dominates the region.

Handor is ruled by a military junta, supported by wealthy aristocratic landowners. Castica suffered a revolution a couple of years ago, when the ruling dictator was overthrown, and a democratic government gained power. The new government is not popular in Handor and Arnit, since it has passed laws detrimental to foreign investment, causing great financial loss in these countries. Border incidents have increased in recent months.

The players (currently staying in Jaco, Castica's capital) are approached by a major of Castica's military intelligence. He offers them Cr50,000 if they will steal two fire engines from Handor's capital and transport them to Jaco.

The capitals are situated only about 10 km apart, with a good road connecting

them. The border is about midway between. A couple of years before the revolution, both countries jointly formed a special fire-fighting unit, equipped (at great expense) to handle complicated urban/industrial fires. The unit was better than either country could have afforded individually. It was stationed in Azacul, but could operate freely in both countries. A week ago, the government of Handor nationalized the unit, expelled all the unit's Castican personnel, and prohibited it from crossing the border.

In ten days the Castican president will make an official visit to Handor to discuss the current problems between the two nations. A faction of the Castican government expects the discussion to be unsuccessful, and has decided to try to stage a propaganda coup. The players' task is to steal the two vehicles the night after the president's departure from Handor.

Referee's Information:

There are several conditions to the ticket. The vehicles must be in usable condition when they get across the border. Minor damage is acceptable, but the players will receive a 5% bonus for each vehicle that is delivered totally undamaged. If only one vehicle is recovered, they will be paid half the promised salary. If the players kill or injure anyone, or if they are caught or killed, Castica will deny any involvement.

The specific unit consists of two vehicles with thirty-meter ladders and two vehicles with 12 cubic meter foam tanks and sophisticated protective equipment for the firemen. All trucks are capable of 120 kph, have a range of 150 km, and are painted a high visibility yellow.

The vehicles are stationed in the Azacul main fire station, situated in the outskirts of the city. The station consists of two buildings: a main one containing six ordinary fire-engines and quarters for their crews, and a secondary building containing the special engines and crews' quarters. The doors and windows of both buildings are equipped with special burglar alarms. The Castican patron will supply the players with blueprints of the station and maps of the capital and the surrounding countryside.

The border between Castica and Handor is crossed by the inter-capital road and by several small roads of low quality. The border crossings are all guarded by the Handorian para-military border police, and by the Castican army. The border police are equipped with TL-6 infantry weapons, and are somewhat trigger-happy. They should be treated with care, although they can be bribed if the offer is large enough and made with proper diplomacy.

The Castican army is also very jumpy, and will also need to be carefully handled. Since the government is not officially involved, the army cannot be informed ahead of time. It wouldn't do to get the vehicles safely to the border, and then have them destroyed in a firefight.

— *Anders Blixt*

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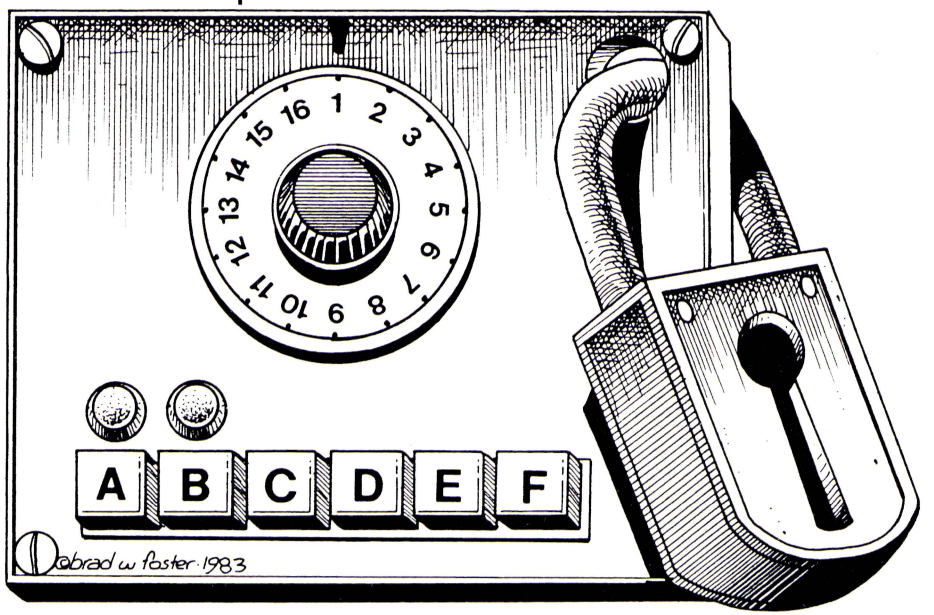


LOCKS

Of frequent interest to many adventurers are places that, for whatever reason, are off-limits to them. Usually, if forced entry of such a location is desired, violence is employed to breach a secured entry. For those with a need of secrecy, though, a more difficult (but less obvious) method of penetration is lockpicking. Moreover, the same adventurers may require security measures themselves, to discourage others from such activity.

LOCKPICK SETS

As mentioned in Equipment, small kits are available to defeat locks. The rules state that success is achieved on 8+, assuming an ordinary lock, such as is common on residences. (More sophisticated measures are, of course, more difficult to defeat.) Possible DMs should include unusually high or low dexterity and/or streetwise skill.

A lockpick set of a given tech level cannot be used against types of locks of higher tech levels, though it may be used against a lock of a higher tech level if it is equipped to deal with that type of lock. For example, a TL 6 kit cannot be used against electronic locks, since these begin to appear at TL 7. However, the same kit could be used against a TL 7 deadbolt lock, albeit at a slight disadvantage; the difference in tech levels could be used as a DM to the success roll.

LOCKS

There are several types, ranging from simple tumbler mechanisms to complex electronic metabolic scanners. Most

minimum security locks are approximately the same size: heavier and more expensive.

Tumbler Locks: The first true locks, these devices work by moving a number of small metal or plastic pins into sleeves measured to precise lengths. When the tumblers are moved the proper distances by a properly-shaped piece of metal, the latch is free to move. Two keys generally come with each lock, duplicates can be made for a few credits. Tumbler locks can be keyed to work for several different keys, allowing some keys to open a series of locks, others only one.

Padlocks (portable versions) appear at tech level 5.
Tech level: 4. *Price:* Cr25.

Combination Locks: A nested series of notched disks are rotated by a numbered outer disk to points where a tumbler falls into each notch. These locks depend upon the large number of possible combinations for security. These are also available as padlocks.
Tech Level: 5. *Price:* Cr30.

Electronic Locks: Any of several types of locks that depend upon solid state circuitry to arm and disarm them. Most have an automatic locking device in the event of power failure; more expensive versions have their own power sources (either primary or backup).

All electronic locks can be set to give selective access (that is, limit access of certain individuals, to certain times of day, etc.).

Keypads are similar to combination locks in that a series of numbers or letters must be entered in order to open them. This lock usually takes the form of a terminal-like keyboard next to the door.
Tech Level: 7. *Price:* Cr40.

Magnetic Readers recognize the coding imprinted on a magnetized strip. This coding is usually sealed in a plastic card.
Tech Level: 8. *Price:* Cr50.

Fingerprint Readers contain a small sensor that recognizes the distinctive markings on the skin of a human thumb pressed against a glass or plastic plate.
Tech Level: 8. *Price:* Cr50.

Voiceprint Readers identify the distinctive tones of individual voices.
Tech Level: 8. *Price:* Cr 75.

Retinal Scanners identify the distinctive pattern of blood vessels in the retina of the eye.
Tech Level: 9. *Price:* Cr75.

Metabolic Scanners are a sophisticated network of scanners and sensors which distinguish individuals by various physical and chemical characteristics (size, mass, retinal patterns, voice patterns, brainwaves, blood analysis, and so on). Some models may require a small sample of tissue (such as a hair or a drop of blood) to be deposited into the lock. More advanced versions only require the user to be near them.
Tech Level: 9. *Price:* Cr200.

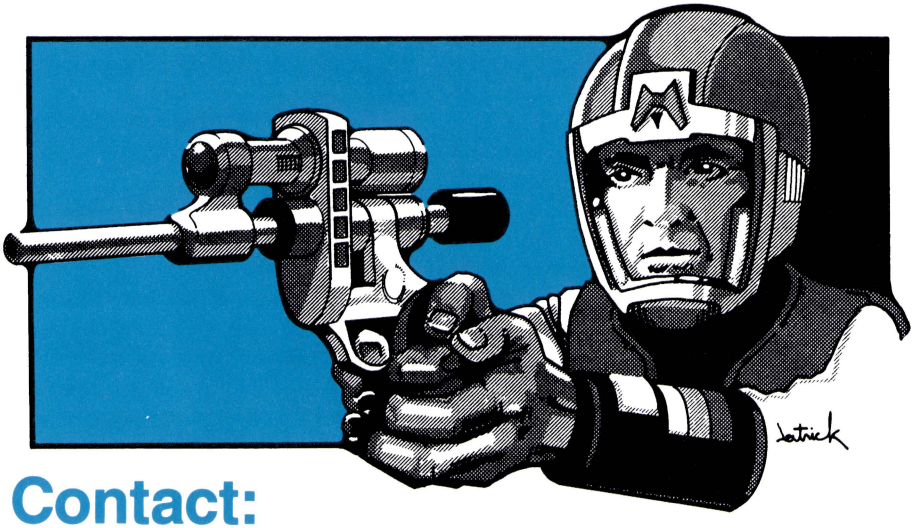
APPLICATIONS

A suggested method of applying DMs based on a lock's effectiveness is to allow −1 for each multiple of the lock's basic price spent on the lock in question.

Use of these types of locks by NPCs is up to the referee, but here are a few suggestions and guidelines. In general, the more expensive a lock is, the more valuable the area to which it restricts access. Starships generally use state-of-the-art electronic locks with remote controls on the bridge. Starships usually set a stateroom's lock for the passenger or passengers who are using it, and restrict access by others to the high level officers of the ship.

Residences primarily use tumbler locks up to about tech 10, and do not often use other types until about three levels after their introduction.

— *Dave Bryant*



Contact:
The Sword Worlders

The inhabitants of the various planets of the Sword Worlds Confederation (collectively called Sword Worlders) are a major presence in the Spinward Marches. Although they are not a separate race, they are socialogically and culturally different enough to warrant treatment in *Contact.*

HISTORY

The Inhabitants of the Sword Worlds are descended from Solomani exiles which arrived in the subsector ca. −400. The first settlement in the region was on Gram in −399. By −200 the settlement of the area was largely complete, and the first interstellar government in the region, the Sacnoth Dominate, was formed in −186. Consisting of the twenty worlds settled up to that point, the Dominate lasted until −102, when rebellion split the region into several smaller governmental bodies.

During the ensuing centuries, various Sword World governments rose and fell, sometimes coalescing all the worlds under a single world's domination, sometimes splintering into several small states. Contact with Imperial traders in 73 brought increased trade and had a stabilizing influence on the region, but this stability was short-lived. During this period, Imperial alliances with the Darrians provoked Sword Worlds suspicion and paranoia, leading to the participation of the Sword Worlds in the Outworld Coalition, and to the long standing opposition to the Imperium which prevails to the present time.

The First Frontier War brought a desire for cooperation among the various squabbling worlds, and the end of the war saw the formation of the first unified confederation in centuries, centered on Sacnoth, and referred to as the Second Dominate. After the war, the Second Dominate annexed Terant 340, Torment, Trifuge, and Cunnonic, all in the Darrian subsector. The conflict between the Darrian and Sword Worlds confederations can be traced to this annexation.

At the end of the Second Frontier War, the Imperial military occupied the worlds of Margesi, Hrunting, Mjolnir, Gungnir, Tizon, Colada, Joyeuse, Dyrwyn, Duren-

dal, Hofud and Biter. This occupation continued for 5 years, and only served to aggravate the anti-Imperial feeling of these worlds.

The Second Dominate held power until 698, when it was overthrown by a coalition headed by Gram. The Gram Coalition ruled until 788, when a short war with the Darrian Confederation resulted in the loss of the four worlds gained during the First Frontier War. Public outrage at the mishandling of the war caused the subsequent fall of the Gram government. The replacement for the Gram Coalition was the Trilateral Alliance, a decentralized organization headed by Narsil, Sacnoth, and Durendal. The Alliance broke up in 848, due in large part to the inherent weakness of its organization, and an interregnum of independent worlds and small clusters of two or three worlds lasted until Gram reasserted its influence (helped substantially by Zhodani money and advisors, rumor has it) in 852. This government has remained in control down to the present.

In 1098, a civil war broke out on Joyeuse, balkanizing the planet. The Confederation government blockaded the world in order to allow local forces to settle the question free from outside influences, and the fighting has continued, off-and-on, ever since.

In 1105, war again erupted between the Imperium and the Outworld Coalition. The Sword Worlds commenced military action against the Vilis and Lanth subsectors attacking or occupying Vilis, Garda Vilis, Saurus, Tavonni, Choleosti, Lanth, and D'ganzio. The war has not yet been concluded, although as of 241-1109 the Sword Worlds' incursions had been stopped and their forces dealt several severe defeats.

SOCIETY

The original settlers of the Sword Worlds were derived from Germanic and Nordic stock (old Terran cultural groups), but these terms had only linguistic meaning by this time. The peculiar culture of the Sword Worlds developed out of local conditions, heavily influenced by Solomani culture.

Language: The official language of the Sword Worlds is a variant of Icelandic, borrowing heavily from other Nordic languages as well as from Germanic tongues and from Vilani. All confederation business is conducted in the official language. Individual planets have their own dialects or languages. Galanglic is widely understood in governmental and mercantile circles, and Zhodani is spoken by some officials.

Culture: Each world of the Sword Worlds has its own specific culture, but the differences are almost undistinguishable to outsiders, and there is considerable common ground. Sword Worlds society is militaristic and male-dominated, women having a much more subordinate position than in the Imperium. Almost without exception, men fill important public offices, business positions, and high military commands. While women are not legally or culturally prohibited from any occupation, any woman in a "male" profession is expected to exhibit male rather than female behavior (at least in public). The reverse, however, is not true. Men may never exhibit female behaviors (in public at least) without losing face. In addition, men and women share a good many behavioral characteristics.

Direct action is the primary male characteristic. Men are expected to be taciturn, stern, and strong-willed.

Passivity is the primary female characteristic. Women are expected to remain in the background, unless they are in a "male" occupation (as noted above). This aspect of their culture has led one Imperial wag to describe the Sword Worlds as "where men are men

and women are men, too . . .''

Both sexes are expected to be honorable and stoic in the face of pain and adversity. Obedience to superiors and respect for authority are instilled at an early age, and those who feel they have not received the respect due to them will probably react violently (men especially). Sword Worlders are often characterised by outsiders as vain, easily provoked braggards, for this reason. Sword Worlders view outsiders as mewling cowards until shown otherwise.

PSIONICS

The Sword Worlds do not suppress psionic talents, but neither have they made them an integral part of their culture as the Zhodani have. Psi powers are viewed with distaste by Sword World men, and any male possessing them will be reluctant to admit to them or use them in public. There is a degree of paranoia among the non-psionic population, which keeps those with psi talents from openly using them. A third factor (and in many ways the most significant) is the fact that the only Psionics Institute in the Sword Worlds is located on Sacnoth. Even though the planetary government does not make overt use of psionic talents (because of the social and cultural pressures mentioned above), the omnipresent interworld rivalry reinforces the latent anti-psi prejudice among the inhabitants (and governments) of those worlds not politically dominated by Sacnoth.

This public prejudice against psionics has been the major element in limiting Zhodani influence in the region.

GOVERNMENT

The government of the Sword Worlds Confederation allows almost complete local autonomy. Individual worlds maintain separate military forces, pass their own laws, and completely regulate their own internal affairs. A Confederation Council, made up of representatives from all worlds, regulates interworld trade, handles diplomatic relations with outside powers, and adjudicates interworld disputes.

The so-called ''metal worlds'' (Iron, Bronze, Mithril and Steel) have been designated resource worlds, and placed under the direct administration of the Confederation government for further development. There are no permanent residents, and the only inhabitants are the Confederation Patrol and the various mining and resource exploitation personnel (employees of firms which are licensed to conduct operations by the Confederation government).

MILITARY

In peacetime, the Confederation

government maintains a pool of high-ranking military officers (selected from the military forces of all worlds) who are trained in large unit command and staff operations.

During time of war, all military forces are confederalized, and placed under a single unified command. For ground forces, units up to division size are commanded by officers from the individual worlds, corps and higher organizations by Confederation officers. The component forces of a division are from the same world whenever possible (in the case of mixed divisions, the commanding officers are from the majority world of the division).

For naval forces, individual ships are commanded by local officers, and squadrons or higher organizations by Confederation officers.

The Confederation also maintains an interplanetary patrol which suppresses piracy, operates the starports, and administers customs and tariff regulations in non-planetary space.

THE SWORD WORLDS & THE WAR

As a part of the Outworld Coalition, the Sword Worlds attacked the Imperium in 1107, meeting with some initial success, but rapidly bogging down.

Despite this, the Sword World's military forces did not suffer a major defeat until the battles for Lanth from 096 to 241-1109. The Sword World squadrons, accompanying troop transports for the conquest and occupation of Lanth, were surprised by the Imperial 193rd fleet and severely mauled. The ground forces, consisting of troops from Gram, Sacnoth, and Narsil, had been able to land and secure the system (despite fierce local resistance), but were stranded by the defeat of their fleet, and eventually surrendered after a long and hard-fought struggle.

This seems to have been the turning point in the war, because Sword World conducted no more major offensive operations.

REFEREEING SWORD WORLDERS

Sword Worlders present no major problems to the referee.

Character Generation: Since the Sword Worlders are descendants of Solomani, their character generation proceeds normally, with the following modifications:

Psionic abilities are acquired according to the **Traveller** rules, without modification.

The Scout service is replaced by the Patrol service. The Patrol service acts as an interplanetary police and customs service within the Confederation. It suppresses piracy, is responsible for enforcing trade restrictions between the worlds of the Confederation and the outside, it protects the so-called metal worlds, and it adjudicates minor disputes between worlds.

Details of the Patrol service character generation procedure (in the form of character generation tables) can be found in the forms on pages 18 and 19. Specific permission is granted to readers to reproduce these two pages for personal use.

PLAYING SWORD WORLDERS

Sword Worlders should present no difficulty to players, provided they follow the simple restrictions outlined above. The main thing to remember is their extreme pride and demand for personal respect. Their low opinion of non-Sword Worlders (especially the Zhodani, because of their use of psionics) will cause much friction between them and outsiders (until the outsiders have proven themselves worthy of friendship). Bear in mind, however, that they are not fools, and will not enter into fights they cannot win.

SWORD WORLDS CHRONOLOGY

−391	First Settlement on Gram.
−300	Joyeuse, Colada, Tizon and Hrunting settled.
−200	Tyrfing, Beater, Sacnoth, Excalibur, Hofud, Sting, Biter, Orcrist, Anduril, Durendal, Narsil, Dyrnwyn settled.
−189	Sacnoth Dominate forms first intersteller government in the region.
−164	First Sword World contacts with Darrians.
−104	Tyrfing Incident begins War of the First Rebellion (−104 to −88).
−102	Sacnoth Dominate breaks up into Gram Confederation, Sacnoth Confederacy, and Hofud Assembly. These governments rapidly disintegrate, beginning a period of disorganized infighting, with no clear dominant government.
−80	Complete breakdown of interstellar government in the region. Local government by individual, independent worlds.
−11	Some interstellar government restored. Five governments in control of the region.
73	First contact with Imperium (traders).
104	Establishment of Triple Dominion (headed by Colada-Anduril-Dyrwyn axis).
217	Break-up of the Triple Dominion, and resumption of small, squabbling governments.
589-604	First Interstellar War.
604	Re-establishment of Sacnoth Dominate, called by historians the Second Dominate. This government incorporates the conquered Darrian worlds.
615-620	Second Frontier War
621-626	Imperial military forces occupy 12 worlds of Second Dominate.
698	Second Dominate overthrown by Gram Coalition.
788	Darrian War results in loss of the 4 Darrian worlds gained in 604. Because of this, the Gram Coalition is replaced by the Trilateral Alliance of Narsil, Sacnoth and Durendal.
848	The Trilateral Alliance breaks up into several smaller states, and interstellar anarchy returns.
852	Current government formed, based at Gram.
979-986	Third Frontier War.
1082-1084	Fourth Frontier War.
1098+	Joyeuse Civil War.
1107	Fifth Frontier War begins. Sword World troops invade Vilis and Lanth subsectors as part of the Outworld Coalition.
1109	Sword World units suffer serious defeats.

CHARACTER GENERATION DATA

1. Date of Preparation
274-1109

2. Character Type
Sword Worlds Patrol Service

3. Prior Service Table

Prior Service Table

Enlist 7+

DM +1 if Intel 6+

Draft 4

Survival 5+

DM +1 if Endur 8+

Position 6+

DM +1 if intel 8+

Promo 7+

DM +1 if Intel 6+

Return 7+

4. Table of Ranks

Table of Ranks

1. Konstabel
2. Overhode
3. Leutnant
4. Overleutnant
5. Kapiten
6. Oberst

5. Acquired Skills Tables

Acquired Skill Tables

	Personal Development	*Service Skills*
	1. +1 Strength	1. Air/Raft
	2. Gambling	2. Vacc-suit
	3. +1 Endurance	3. Mechanical
	4. +1 Intelligence	4. Navigation
	5. +1 Education	5. Electronics
	6. Gun Combat	6. Admin
	Education	*Advanced Education*
	1. Pilot	1.Tactics
	2. Mechanical	2. Navigation
	3. Electronics	3. Engineering
	4. Jack-o-T	4. Computer
	5. Gunnery	5. Medical
	6. Leader	6. Jack-o-T
	Restrictions: –	Restrictions: –

6. Skill Eligibility

Two per first term, one per subsequent term.

7. Automatic Skills

Pilot-1.

8. Character Type

Sword World Patrol Service

9. Benefit Tables

Benefit Tables

Material Benefits	*Cash Benefits*
1. Low Psg	1. Cr20,000
2. +2 Intel	2. Cr20,000
3. +1 Educ	3. Cr30,000
4. Blade	4. Cr30,000
5. Gun	5. Cr50,000
6. High Psg	6. Cr50,000
7. —	7. Cr60,000
Restrictions:	Restrictions: No more than 3 rolls. Gambling allows +1

10. Benefit Descriptions

Per basic rules.

11. Skill Descriptions

Per basic rules.

12. Career Restrictions

Open only to citizens of the Sword Worlds Confederation.

Ready-Made Chrome For Traveller Campaigns

The **Traveller** referee is often faced with the problem of trying to simulate a situation which is not directly provided for in any of the rules, supplements, or games produced specifically for **Traveller** by GDW. If my game closet is any indication, the average wargamer's collection should consist of upwards of thirty different titles, ranging in scale from *Gladiator* to *World War III,* in complexity from *War at Sea* to *Wings,* and in technological scope from *Sticks and Stones* to **Traveller** itself. With access to such a collection, a referee has the means to simulate just about any unpleasant situation in which the players can become involved and still have noticeable effect.

Normal characters, for instance, have quite a different impact on the mapboard of *Fifth Frontier War* than a single Tech 13 mercenary would have on the mapboard of *Sticks and Stones* or *Raphia.* The former's skills and presence may simply alter a die roll here and there; the latter might very well alter the map itself.

As examples of what can be done in various environments, consider the following.

SURFACE NAVAL CONFLICTS

Very little mention is made in **Traveller** of maritime naval conflicts, less still of very low tech level conflicts of any kind. If players find themselves on a TL 1 planet, they might make use of indigenous transport. Oars are an arguably inevitable maritime transport development, so just about any world's culture will develop them sooner or later. (If it doesn't, the players might introduce them on their own.)

For simulating transport and combat between galleys, use a boardgame such as *Ram Speed, Trireme* or *Bireme and Galley.* My personal choice is *Ram Speed,*

since it is simple, fast playing, and easily learned, as well as being the least expensive of the three. Figures on the dimensions of ancient warships are readily available from any encyclopedia should you decide to use deckplans for individual combat, and specifications for archaic missile weapons can be found in *Journal* #11, although the ranges need to be altered somewhat. If player characters are on board when a ship is rammed or takes a hit from a war engine, treat the situation exactly as with space combat from Book 2; determine the character's proximity to the impact zone, then make a two-die throw for 9+ to avoid taking damage, failure resulting in the character taking some large amount of wounds (if not being killed outright).

Needless to say, player characters with advanced weaponry will make quite an impression on their opponents in such a situation; weapons such as plasma guns or even grenades will actually do damage to hulls. To simulate this, figure out the damage inflicted by the weapon on impact with the vessel's (presumably) wooden hull. In terms of *Azhanti High Lightning*, a wooden hull has a penetration modifier of about 8; a light wound will do about a point of hull damage, a serious wound 2 points and a death result 3 points. Water Craft skill levels, should be accommodated wherever applicable.

Treat the armor class of galley marines as being no more than jack or mesh, with pirates most likely wearing no armor at all.

If the tech level of a maritime conflict involving player characters is somewhat higher, the redoubtable *Wooden Ships & Iron Men* is available, as are *The Ironclads,* its expansion kit, *Jutland, Bismarck,* even *War at Sea.*

For strategic-scale games in which the players participate, one or two extra counters should be made up to represent them. Keep in mind that as the scale of the game and/or technological level of the combatants increases, the effect the players will have on the conflict (to the point of warranting their own counter or counters) will diminish.

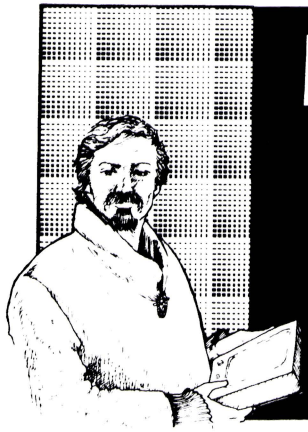
AERIAL CONFLICTS

In an air conflict, Issue #2 of the *Journal* provided satisfactory rules for combat between airships. If the tech level is higher, into the level of fixed-wing aircraft, use *Richtofen's War, Fight in the Skies, Wings, Air Force* or even (if you feel competently familiar with the rules) *Air War.* If using *Richtofen's War* with the maneuver cards or *Fight in the Skies,* simply allow the player character(s) an extra maneuver card for each level of Fixed-wing Aircraft skill over one, and an extra card for every three levels of Ship's Boat skill. I'm not overly familiar with the other game systems mentioned, but someone who is could certainly alter them to suit the purpose without too much trouble. If the player's involvement is on a somewhat larger scale, *Luftwaffe* would do nicely. Since the counters represent entire wings or geschwaders, the player's counter might be only a squadron with an E rating of about 8, a speed of 12 to 18 (or even higher), gunnery equal to the maximum given on the game fire chart, a time in air of about five turns, and perhaps the ability to bomb.

GROUND CONFLICTS

For ground combat beyond the scale of *Striker,* the referee might employ a copy of *The Russian Campaign,* which very neatly simulates a protracted ground conflict between two large industrial nations. In this case, the players might employ their type S Scout as a ground attack craft, or leader transport. It might have a range of fifteen (to simulate the problems with the TL-5

continued on page 31



Populating the Traveller Universe

Consider the following questions: "Is there a doctor on board the lifeboat?" "Who is the man in the space station bar?" Maybe he's the emperor's cousin. Maybe he's nobody. And maybe he's the computer-3 expert your players have spent weeks looking for, but how do you know? The structure of your campaign could require an NPC to be someone, or no one. On those occasions when a random encounter seems best, the following may point the way to fair, consistent answers to questions like these. Travellers will interact with only a small proportion of any world's population. Mercenary recruiters, for example, glean only a few dozen hirlings from a population of ten million; of these, as many as half will lack applicable skills ("raw recruits," as described in Book 4, *Mercenary*). This significant proportion of population lies somewhere between the groups and patrons identified in Book 3; experts, specialists, and fellow adventurers of the sort likely to cross paths with our own player characters. The prior service tables of Book 1 and Supplement 4, *Citizens of the Imperium*, offer the best clues to the make-up of this pool of significant figures.

These sources delimit eighteen service careers, including the special category of nobles. If we assume a population of random UPP with uniform interest in each career, it is possible to calculate the subsequent service experiences of that population. About 8% of the total will be noble, as defined by Book 1 (Social = 11+; Supplement 4's 10+ produces too many yacht-equipped lordlings for my taste). If the remainder seek to enter the other 17 careers, the interaction of random UPPs with enlistment throws and modifiers will yield the percent admitted to each, as indicated below. Those failing their enlistment throws are assumed to pass randomly through the draft described in Book 1.

The resulting totals indicate not only the relative exclusivity of the professions, but also the proportion of scientists, scouts, and so on, active in the pool of significant figures. An encountered NPC can be plausibly assigned a career based on the percentage indicated on the table below (or wherever it ends up).

These figures offer some intriguing clues to the feel of Imperial society and demographics. Besides the nobility, medicine and professional hunting are the most exclusive careers. The navy and the diplomatic corps are nearly as restrictive, and a likely haven for the near

CAREER BREAKDOWNS

Career or Service	*% at Large*	*% W/Successful Enlistment*
Army	9 (01-09)	97
Other	9 (10-18)	97
Merchants	8 (19-26)	83
Noble	8 (27-34)	83 (special: Social 11+)
Scouts	8 (35-42)	77
Navy	7 (43-49)	57
Marines	7 (50-56)	52
Bureaucrat	6 (57-62)	91
Rogue	5 (63-67)	90
Barbarian	5 (68-72)	88
Flyer	5 (73-77)	84
Sailor	4 (78-81)	82
Scientist	4 (82-85)	78
Pirate	4 (86-89)	72
Belter	4 (90-93)	67
Diplomat	3 (94-96)	57
Doctor	2 (97-98)	43
Hunter	2 (99-00)	39

nobility of social level 10. The Marines are still looking for "the few;" conversely, the army offers nearly certain admittance to the average run of Imperial citizens. Such data also offer the practical clues needed to answer questions such as those posed to begin this article. Unless we are dealing with a medical convention, there is only a 2% chance that any given occupant of a lifeboat will be a doctor. The identity of the man at the bar can be readily provided, and fleshed out if necessary through *1001 Characters* or *Citizens*. The recruiting rules from *Mercenary* can be extrapolated as well: if those rules produce a dozen experienced military men on a given world, we can compare the 16% of our pool with army/marine service to any other to derive reasonable figures for other kinds of recruiting work. Flyers, for example, provide only 5% of the pool of significant figures; the same world might then yield four flyers, proportionally, after a search. Obviously, all such calculations remain subject to local conditions, and above all, the referee's sense of the game.

— *Steven Sowards*

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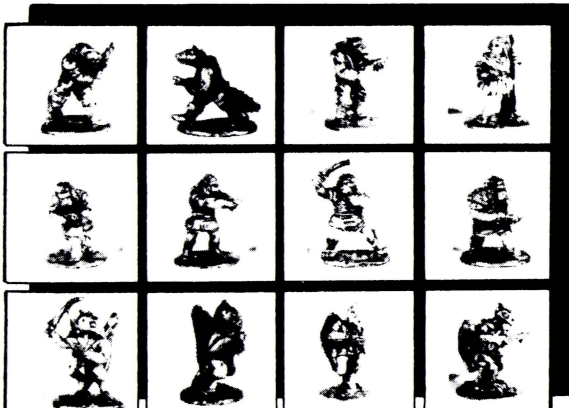

Set 5: Aliens Part

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RandomNotes

Everybody liked the last column, so here is the promised column on naming your alien.

ASLAN

All Aslan (with the exception of a few lost colonies) share a common language and culture. However, this culture is highly complex and custom-bound, and an individual's name can become rather unwieldy.

The clan-head of an independent clan (vassal to no other clan) is known simply by the clan's name; where differentiation is necessary, the particle */ko/* (''himself'') is added. For example, the head of clan Hlyueawi would be known as Hlyueawi or, sometimes, Hlyueawiko. At the opposite extreme, an Aslan lower in the social order (but still a noble) might be named *HlyueawifiyAhroaye'ifiyWahtoiLayeauiwahfeaktelihlalikhtyeiteyahahtateisiyu,* meaning roughly, ''unmarried first son of the third son of the grandfather of the head of the pride which holds the valley in the fork of the Iwahfea River, part of clan Wahtoi, which is a vassal of clan Ahroaye'i, itself a vassal of clan Hlyueawi''.

Females are named for their husbands, fathers, or brothers, depending on circumstance, and non-nobles are named for the nobles of whom they are clients.

Needless to say, most Aslan rarely use their full names; instead they use nicknames, usually commemorating some supposed virtue or accomplishment, which are chosen and discarded whenever the holder wants. Since it would be impossible to go very deeply into Aslan syntax and vocabulary, I will (just like in the last column) present a system for generating random Aslan-sounding words. Players should pick a word and choose an inspiring meaning for it, such as ''killer of ten thousand'', or, less bloodthirsty, ''he honors his ancestors''.

As in the last column, words are constructed syllable by syllable. There are four types: those consisting of just a vowel, those beginning with a consonant, those ending with a consonant, and those both beginning and ending with a consonant. Call the four types V, CV, VC, and CVC. In Aslan words, their relative proportions are about 3:3:2:2.

Within each syllable, there are up to three elements: an initial consonant, a vowel, and a final consonant. The table below shows the relative frequencies of various sounds. The relative frequency of *f* as an initial consonant is 5:87, and that of *h* as a final consonant is 10:47.

Most sounds are pronounced more or less as in English. *F* is as in Japanese. *H* is pronounced somewhat between English *h* and German *ch* in *ach. Kh* is as German *ch,* and *'* is a glottal stop. In the vowels which are diphthongs, the first is accented; for example, *ai* is pronounced as *i* in fine.

To construct a syllable, for example of type CVC, take one initial consonant, one vowel, and one final consonant at random from the list; we could take *hr, ya,* and *lr* to get *hryalr.* (Remember to pronounce that as one syllable.) String syllables together into a word. If you have a computer, you can simulate the roll of 87-, 52-, and 47-sided dice. Otherwise, just try to get the frequencies right.

There are a few additional rules. No syllable which ends with a consonant should be followed by a syllable which begins with a consonant. A vowel should never be followed directly by the same vowel (except diphthongs); for ex-

ample, *aa* would not occur, but *auau* might.

Initial Consonants (87)

f	5	ft	4
h	7	hf	2
hk	5	hl	3
hr	3	ht	5
hw	2	k	7
kh	6	kht	4
kt	4	l	2
r	3	s	4
st	3	t	8
tl	2	tr	2
w	6		

Vowels (52)

a	10	ai	3
ao	2	au	1
e	6	ea	6
ei	2	i	4
iy	3	o	2
oa	1	oi	2
ou	1	u	1
ua	1	ui	1
ya	2	ye	2
yo	1	yu	1

Final Consonants (47)

h	10	kh	4
l	7	lr	3
r	5	rl	4
s	5	w	6
'	3		

VARGR

There are hundreds of Vargr languages and as many forms for names. The most commonly encountered language in the Spinward Marches is Gvegh. Counting the related languages Gvegh-Aek, Knithnour, Uedhu, and Taeksu, the Gvegh language family is spoken by about 60% of Vargr in the Marches and the neighboring Gvurrdoun sector.

Among Gvegh speakers, each individual usually chooses his or her own name upon reaching majority. Names have various significances; some have meaning and some don't. A Vargr may name himself or herself after a personal hero, a significant event in his or her life, a personal accomplishment, or just about anything else.

Once again, the player should assemble a random word and attach any significance desired to it. The ratio of V:CV:VC:CVC in Gvegh is about 1:3:3:3.

Most sounds can be pronounced as in English; it won't be quite right, but it's as close as we can come. *Kh,* once again, is as German *ach*; *gh* is the same, but voiced. *Rr* is a rolled *r*, and *ll* is a rolled *l*. *Ng* is as in *king*. *Th* is as in *think; dh* is as *th* in *this*. *Ae, oe,* and *ue* are fronted vowels. All in all, Gvegh is hard to pronounce without sounding like you have a hacking cough.

One additional rule: no syllable beginning with a vowel can follow a syllable ending with a vowel.

Initial Consonants (115)

d	5	dh	5
dz	3	f	4
g	10	gh	6
gn	2	gv	4
gz	4	k	10
kf	3	kh	6
kn	3	ks	3
l	4	ll	4
n	2	ng	2
r	5	rr	4
s	5	t	4
th	4	ts	2
v	5	z	6

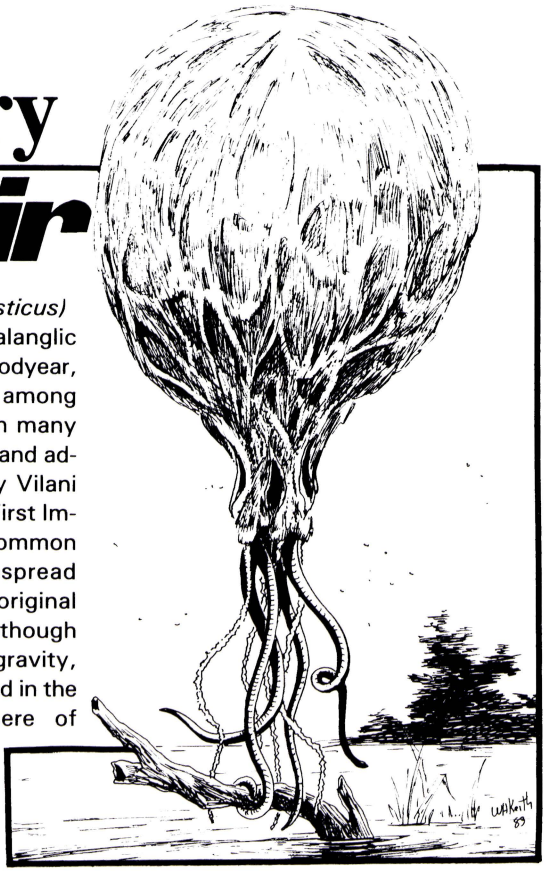
Vowels (26)

a	5	ae	4
e	2	i	1
o	4	oe	2
ou	2	u	3
ue	3		

continued on page 39

The Bestiary

Luugiir



(Aeromedusae globosus domesticus)

Also known by a number of galanglic names — blimp, balloon-head, goodyear, drifter, floater, and gasbag, among others — the Luugiir is found on many worlds throughout the Imperium and adjacent regions. Domesticated by Vilani colonists sometime early in the First Imperium, the animal became a common and popular pet, and was spread throughout Vilani space. It original homeworld is no longer known, though it is probably one of the low-gravity, dense atmosphere worlds included in the earliest Vilani interstellar sphere of influence.

The Luugiir is invertebrate-like, resembling in some respects a Terrestrial jellyfish; its position on the evolutionary scale, however, is much superior, and it has been surmised that the animal's home world never developed vertebrate-like forms.

Luugiirs earn their names from their highly unusual nature. Through a mechanism which continues to fascinate xenobiologists right down to the present day, these animals generate and store hydrogen gas in large bladders, turning them into organic balloons.

The Luugiir spends a large portion of each day resting in or floating just above small pools of water, lakes, streams, and the like. The creature takes in water, which is broken down into component hydrogen and oxygen. The hydrogen is stored in the creatures gasbag, giving it buoyancy; photoreceptive surfaces on the upper surface of the animal absorb energy needed for this organic electrolysis process from sunlight. The Luugiir also has a limited sort of "maneuvering jet," air from its lungs can be expelled under pressure to give it some control over its direction. (For the most part, the floater just drifts with the wind.) Four grasping tentacles "tether" the beast on convenient plants or rocks until it is ready to let go. Domesticated Luugiir are sometimes fitted with a collar attached to a long thin cable, to keep them from being blown away. Others are provided with a network of cables suspended from poles, to which they anchor themselves during high winds.

The Luugiir's main source of food comes from small flying creatures. A filter-feeder, the Luugir drifts through clouds of such animals, consuming them. Domesticated animals will eat almost anything released into the air, and are easy to care for.

Luugiirs have a natural defense against predators, in the form of four specialized "stinger" tentacles. These inject a fast-acting poison which inhibits the involuntary muscle action of most animals. The poison causes respiratory failure, seizures, and death within 2-12 minutes for humans. Domesticated Luugiirs, however, usually have their poison sacs removed, in the same way as the scent sacs of a pet Terrestrial skunk can be rendered ineffective.

Luugiirs can be trained with patience and (in the case of those with intact stingers) caution. In certain rare cases, floaters have been trained to attack on command, and are used by assassins or guardians of valuable property. Despite their size (a Luugiir usually ranges from .75 to 1.5 meters in diameter), floaters are light, since most of their body is the gas bag and associated systems. The body proper, containing the animal's vital organs, is suspended below the gas bag, where the eight tentacles come together. Total body weight rarely exceeds 3 kilograms, although larger animals have been reported.

Luugiir are bisexual and oviparous. The mating flight of a pair of Luugiirs is a spectacle of rare grace and beauty. The animals usually form one lasting pair-bond, and hatch two young Luugiirs each year.

Luugiirs are approximately as intelligent as a Terrestrial housecat, but exhibit the loyalty, affection, and faithfulness of a dog (An early Solomani account of the animals refers to them as a "sort of aerial airedale"). They are popular as pets; their excellent senses and characteristic moaning warning cry make them fine watchdogs.

Some Luugiirs have returned to a wild state, and can be encountered on many worlds where the atmosphere is breathable and the competition from more efficient aerial forms is not severe. They are mildly dangerous, because of their stingers, but can be avoided by exercising a modicum of caution.

— John Marshal

Tree Lion

(Platapedalis arborus)

Tree Lions (also called drop spiders or shovel spiders) are trapbuilding carni-

continued on page 44

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Ref's Notes

Jack Of All Trades

Most skills in **Traveller** are reasonably well-defined as to function; everyone understands what Demolitions or Medical or Handgun skill allows the player to do. This is not so with Jack-of-all-trades, unfortunately. We all know what to do with players who try to unfairly exploit their skills ("Good try, Luke, but there just plain wasn't any breathable air in that vacuum, even if you are a survival-7.") but what constitutes fair use of a universal skill?

One answer is to treat J-o-T as a skill enabler, in the fashion of Instruction skill. Instruction has no value of itself, but enables the teaching of other skills. Likewise, J-o-T may be used to enable stretching of a player's other skills.

When using this rule, allow a person with a specific skill plus J-o-T skill to practice directly related skills at one level below the skill or the J-o-T level, whichever is less, and distantly related skills at half this value. Directly related skills are those that fall into a single category on the skills tables: Gun Combat, for example, or Ground Vehicles. "Distantly related" skills are defined as those of a similar general function, such as Gun Combat and Heavy Weapons, or Air Vehicles and Ground Vehicles.

Example: A person with Rifle-3 and J-o-T-2, could fire a pistol or other small arm at skill-1, and a support weapon such as a grenade launcher or a light assault gun at skill-0 (thus avoiding negative modifiers).

Referees using this rule are urged to keep a lid on things; many military officers are armed with pistols, but Pistol and Leader skill are not related. An experienced truck driver should be able to make an air/raft go in the right direction, but not fly a Tomcat. Also, a person may not teach skills he knows by inference, no matter what his effective skill level or Instruction skill level.

Another point to keep in mind: the other half of the phrase "jack of all trades" is ". . . and master of none."

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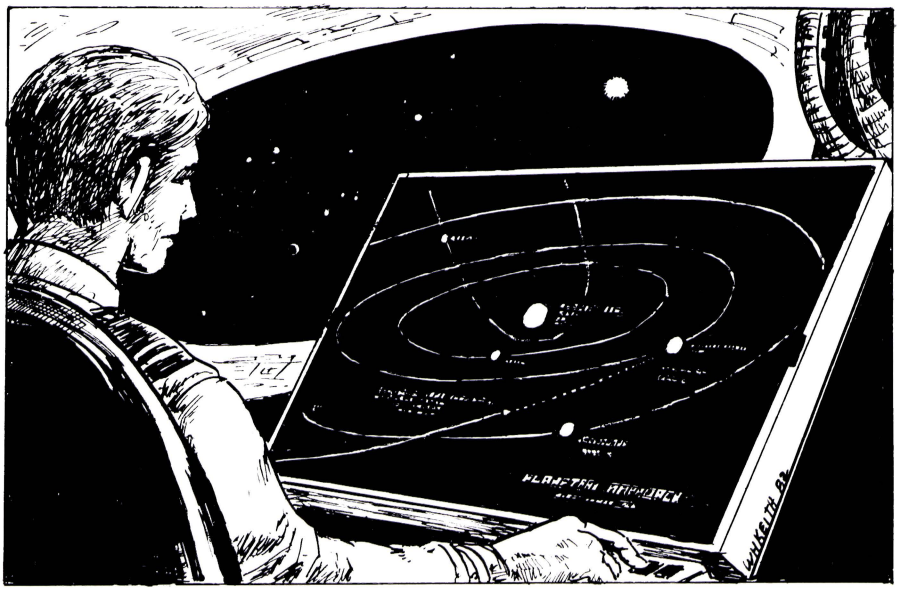
communications gear of the headquarters units), it would raise the odds of an attack like a Stuka, but would also allow the attacker to add 2 to his die roll. A grav APC regiment would have an attack factor of about 8, a movement of 15 on the first impulse and 7 on the second, ignore weather effects, move over water, and have a zone of control which extends 2 hexes rather than 1. It should have to spend extra points to pass over certain terrain: +1 per woods hex, +2 per city hex, and +4 per mountain hex. It should not be eliminated by retreat results when surrounded, since it could literally fly away.

These last examples are for strategic considerations, and really shouldn't concern the referee much, unless his players are enamored with the idea of setting themselves up ruling a low-tech world, or defending it from someone who is.

— Don Hawthorne

Travelling Without a Starship



To most players and referees, a science fiction game format like that of **Traveller** implies a need for star-spanning adventures that range far and wide, skipping without pause from one planet to another across parsecs at a time. They lose sight of the true scope of space; the great range of possibilities open even to those who are unable to indulge in interstellar travel.

A single planet alone can furnish multitudes of adventure ideas. Tens of millions of square kilometers of surface area are open to ventures in dozens of climates and terrain types, among many cultures and subcultures, and among different levels of civilization . . . any referee could keep games going for years on a single isolated planet, with no need for repetition of adventures and no need for a spaceship. Some very successful adventure novels have worked this way.

Nonetheless, science fiction does seem to demand a certain amount of travel through the void. Though, in reality, planets are awfully big places with lots of room for variety; in practice there is a tendency to get bored with a planet after a short time, never realizing that Paris, the Amazon jungle, the Gobi desert, and Chicago are all different, all on the same world (although there are doubts about Chicago), and all equally valid for adventuring ideas. Once a referee has sketched in the basics of a planet's description, there is a marked feeling that this has terribly limited the possibilities of the world.

So, travelling must remain the center of **Traveller**. Places get boring; the adventurers move on. But need they move on to another hex in the sector? Sometimes the next system doesn't look any more interesting than the one you've started from. Often there's nothing that points in any one direction to go in, or there aren't any ships available, or not enough money to book a passage. When restlessness sets in, the players or the referee might well have trouble deciding where to travel.

All the time, right under their noses,

there are lots of ways they can make that urge to travel take them in an entirely unusual direction. This is interplanetary voyaging . . . sticking in the same star system while getting a change-of-world.

The basic **Traveller** design concept was and is the best possible way to go about things. From the viewpoint of effective use of information, the format used in Supplement 3, *The Spinward Marches* covers the most territory for the money. Imagine what it would look like if the same number of star systems were presented, but with every ball of rock and worthless gas giant cataloged in the same kind of detail. That supplement could be as much as ten times as long, and we'd not gain that much.

Instead, the potential is there for the referee to create worlds in a system other than those listed. The world creation rules allow for worlds at random. A still more attractive option is using the system as a guide for personally designed worlds, where options are chosen, rather than rolled for randomly. This is one area of **Traveller** where the imagination really has a chance to take off. Unfortunately, it isn't often done.

Creating a star system with all its myriad possibilities requires a little thought and effort. Doing it well, within the framework of a consistent universe, will require more than rolling dice several times, but the process itself can be both a challenge and a reward, and the result will magnify both the interest and the believability of a star system a thousandfold.

An important first step: don't start creating new planets until you have taken a look at the ones you've already got. You'll always know at least two things about a star system when you start . . . what one of the planets is like, and whether or not there is a gas giant present.

The planet you've got will set limits on those you set out to create. For instance, whatever starport you find listed will be the best one in the system. This cannot be altered without playing havoc with the whole structure of the universe (that's less of a problem when you're dealing with your own universe; when playing in a published **Traveller** sector, though, it's not wise). A similar consideration should arise from the general quality of the listed real estate. If the planet is perfectly Earthlike, well and good. If it is a ball of slag with no atmosphere and nothing much in the way of population, think twice before you begin to fill the system with other planets which are much more attractive to people.

Why? Because you're going to have to decide why the people chose that world to put their starport on, rather than the nicer one you want to invent. There may be good reasons — you can always make special arguments. As a general rule, though, the planet listed in the stats is the choice piece of real estate in the system.

If you still want to put better worlds in the system, you'll have to justify them, to fend off the wave of player curiosity if nothing else. Why would the main planet of a system be, say, a barren, tenuous atmosphere world rather than the paradise you just decided to add? It might be that the barren world has certain rare minerals that attracted a corporate settlement. Some worlds (those with exotic or other distasteful atmospheres are best) might be the home of some unusual civilized minor race which has been contacted by the Imperium; in this case, the exotic planet is merely the more important for economic or political reasons. You can justify almost anything . . . but don't do it every time. The planets are listed that way for a purpose, and should represent

the best the system has to offer most of the time.

When creating planets in a star system, balance is important. There won't be very many that are earthlike, for example. Three is probably the upper limit — and even there, two of those three are going to be pretty bad to live on, either too hot or too cold. Everything we know about the habitable zone around a star suggests that it isn't that easy to find several pleasant planets in the same system.

Far more numerous are the little barren worlds, the Mercuries and Plutos and Titans. These may seem rather uninteresting at first glance, but there is a lot that could be done. Here are some examples of ways in which a barren planet might play a part in the overall picture of a planet-faring star system's civilization:

— A solar weather station on a Mercurian world either monitoring the flare activity and radiation levels of the star, or conducting more general stellar research. These could become involved in an adventure in several ways, or just be used as background.

— A starport complex could be set up on the primary moon of an inhabited world. Airless, the moon provides repair and maintenance complexes for non-streamlined ships, as well as gigantic entertainment facilities and outposts for scientific and military purposes.

— A military outpost, or a full scale military base might easily be found on the moon of a gas giant, which the **Traveller** universe has endowed with great strategic and tactical importance. Refueling stations (where skimmed fuel is processed and stored) are also good possibilities.

— Manufacturing facilities might be found on many of these small worlds. A cold distant one might produce cryogenic circuitry or superconductors; others could manufacture just about anything.

Other planets that are very interesting are those that can be considered marginally earthlike. The image would be those projected by Lowell's Mars or Herbert's Dune; worlds which are much like Earth, but more extreme. A thin or tainted atmosphere, a hydrosphere too large or too small to be suitable, some referee-imposed quirk of climate; these are things that can make a planet close to earthlike, yet not so close that it doesn't present a whole range of unique problems all its own. These are the worlds where we might encounter domed colonies or other settlement efforts. They are the stock-in-trade of many a fine SF adventure novel.

Exotic, insidious, and corrosive atmosphere worlds should never be neglected. Adventurers won't visit them too often by choice. But they do have their interesting points. Smith's Trenco, arguably the nastiest planet ever created, was nevertheless visited often because a drug of great value, thionite, was harvested and processed there.

Asteroid belts are popular just now. They are fun to set adventures in. You have the possibility of mining, huge asteroid colonies, pirate bases; the choice is enormous. They're great to hide in and exciting to fly through during a chase. By all means consider throwing in asteroid belts, though they too should be used in moderation. Referees and players alike should also remember that popular misconceptions have distorted our view of asteroids. Let us not have collisions and disasters every few minutes in an area where the chances are still astronomically remote of ever seeing two solid pieces of rock at the same time.

We should, of course, make mention of artificial constructs. Orbital satellites and space stations, huge L-5 colonies —

these man- (or whatever-) made habitats will be common in any space-faring system. Since they are usually smaller, the referee might find it easier to set adventures here than on a planet — there's less to worry about, less in the way of gaps to fill in. On an L-5 colony, of course, this won't be quite true, these can be the size of small worlds.

Stranger things can also be added. Double planets, Earth-sized gas giant moons, unusual star systems, are all good for effect if for nothing else. Remember the object is to inspire images that aren't often seen in Hoboken. Take it easy with the unusual items, however. Too many ringworlds and dyson spheres in the same universe are silly. These are highly, highly special things that should be found about as often as hen's teeth.

These just begin to touch the possibilities that might be added to a star system, but why do it? There are many good reasons. First, the referee has more control over these worlds. They can be shaped to the needs of the adventure, rather than the other way around. Another reason is for player economics. They may not be able to afford interstellar passage, so why not travel between planets?

Most importantly, the referee should realize that these other planets are the source of new and different adventures. Where it is hard to spring a decent pirate attack on a ship that only has to travel a few hours before going into jump, how much nicer it is to have the pirate vessel lurking in wait for shipping when the ships can't escape into the security of a jump.

All the worlds discussed above contain the seeds of an adventure. The referee should consider interplanetary travel and adventure as a good alternative to jumping over to the next star. This isn't to say that every system should be treated in enormous depth. Nor should players be forced to stick around long after they've grown thoroughly sick of wherever they've been stranded. But, used with restraint and moderation, the extra attention to detail involved in creating more than one planet for each system is a valuable addition to any campaign.

— J. Andrew Keith

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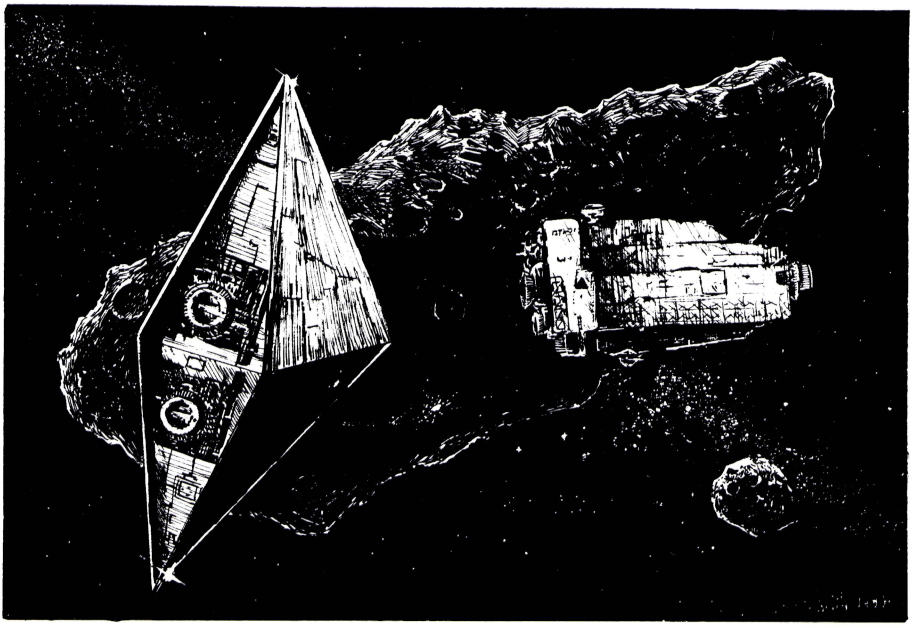

Players' Information

While visiting Banasdan (Banasdan 0510 A-653A44-F), the party is approached by Ringiil Urshukaan, a distinguished businessman who identifies himself as being the president of Lamarck Minerals, LIC, a fairly large mineral exploitation firm with offices and operations in three subsectors of the Solomani Rim.

Amber Zone

A bulk ore carrier, the *Solaria,* disappeared while en route from Banasdan to the nearby system of Arcturus. *Solaria* was one of Lamarck's biggest and newest ships, and was on her maiden voyage. All the way from launch to jump outsystem there was no problem whatsoever; the ore carrier did not, however, show up in the Arcturus belt on schedule. However, there were reports that a contact of approximately the mass and configuration of the missing freighter appeared briefly on sensors in the belt, but was quickly lost in a drifting asteroid cluster.

Urshukaan suspects some type of foul play — a hijacking or theft of some type. He wants the adventurers to look into the matter, and see if they can discover the fate of the missing ore carrier. The group is to be given complete information on the events in the Banasdan system. Urshukaan will also arrange for the cooperation of authorities at Arcturus, should the group decide to check into the contact report.

The party is to be paid Cr50,000 for their work. An advance of Cr5,000 each is authorized; a company voucher is also provided for the duration of the mission to enable the party to use company transportation and facilities as needed.

WITHOUT A TRACE

Urshukaan will be travelling to Heraklion, then to Arcturus; he will meet the party there to receive their findings and pay them if they have successfully completed the assignment.

Referee's Information

Checking into information at Banasdan will make it clear that it is extremely unlikely for the ship to have misjumped or suffered some other mechanical failure. All systems were certified as being fully operational, and *Solaria's* engineer was one of the best in the business.

Solaria's crew were all Lamarck employees, most of them permanently assigned to the Arcturus belt. The ship was carrying neither passengers nor cargo, and it is unlikely that outsiders could have come on board without being noticed.

If the party chooses to follow up the sighting reported in the belt, they can travel to Arcturus (a jump-1 away from Banasdan) on company transport. At the starport, their voucher will allow them to requisition a shuttle for use in travelling in the belt. The sighting report came from one of the deep space stations (station 3) which serve as coordination centers for mining activities.

Working with administrative personnel at station 3, the adventurers can locate the area where the sighting occurred. Should they think to do so, they will be able to gain access to personnel files on crewmen of the *Solaria* who worked in the belt. The information there will indicate that several of the people involved, though top-notch experts in their respective jobs, had very poor records with the company. Disciplinary problems are common to all of them, and three are noted as being involved in an attempt to organize a radical labor union directed against Lamarck's policies. Careful detective work will show that the *Solaria's* doctor, whose record does not bear any of these black marks, doesn't appear in a set of duplicate files. The ID in the doctor's file does match up to another bad apple, Merrick Wilson, a computer technician who had worked in the local personnel office. Wilson apparently engineered the transfer of a number of malcontents to become *Solaria's* crew.

In actual fact, the *Solaria* (an 1800 ton ship similar to the Leviathan class of merchants, but with modifications reducing weaponry, crew, and research facilities in favor of additional cargo space) has been hijacked by Wilson as part of a plot by a number of miners to flee the belt. Lamarck Minerals is a harsh taskmaster, and the miners in Wilson's group have decided to get clean away with the ship and a hefty cargo of valuable ore to set themselves up when they're beyond the reach of the company.

The adventurers will discover this aspect of the plot only if they trace Wilson or the *Solaria.* This can be done in many ways. They might adopt the needle-in-a-haystack approach of combing the area where the station reported a sighting (a laborious and time-consuming task, but one which might eventually pay off). More likely, though, they can discover Wilson by tracing his own record. Investigation of the untampered-with personnel files will turn up the fact that all of the men in Wilson's hijacking crew served at the same mining post, a remote rock not too far from where the ship sighting took place. The post is still staffed by many of the miners who served there at the same time as Wilson and his cronies. The supplies at the outpost include many items a ship might do well to have for a prolonged voyage. Requisitions from the period when Wilson staffed the personnel/admin office prove to be forgeries;

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forgeries which have stocked the outpost with useful engineering spares and other supplies, including a large reserve supply of hydrogen fuel.

If the adventurers act on this fast enough, they will reach the outpost shortly before Wilson and his people complete their preparations. Whether this results in combat with the thirty-eight miners in on the plot will depend on how the situation is handled both by the players and by the referee.

This is intended to be an investigatory adventure, with the group building up information until they can see the correct course of action. More information on the Arcturus system (Arcturus 0501 C-000364-F) and further material relating to Ringiil Urshukaan and Lamarck Minerals will be presented in *Murder at Arcturus Station,* available later this year. Adventure 4, *Leviathan,* is the source of *Solaria's* deck plans.

— *J. Andrew Keith*

continued from page 27

Final Consonants (43)

dh	1	dz	1
g	3	gh	2
ghz	1	gz	1
k	2	kh	2
khs	1	ks	1
l	2	ll	1
n	5	ng	5
r	3	rr	3
rrg	1	rrgh	1
rs	1	rz	1
s	1	th	1
ts	1	z	2

— *John Harshman*

Editor's Note: Random Notes will return whenever John is inspired to put together another installment. If you've enjoyed the previous two articles, write us and suggest your favorite topic. We might have something like it on file.

Small Cargoes and Special Handling

The trade and commerce rules in **Traveller** (both those concerned with cargo transport and the speculative trade section), concern themselves with the transport of large lots of cargo — all in excess of a ton. This is, indeed, the backbone of all mercantile activity . . . but there are a number of features of considerable interest to players and referees which relate to smaller cargoes of the kind not available on the regular cargo or trade tables.

For instance, consider smuggling. Smugglers are not particularly likely to deal in any cargo which displaces several tons (unless they are ready to regularly and heavily bribe every official they run into). It is very difficult to conceal even one ton of forbidden or restricted merchandise from the prying eyes of revenue or customs inspectors. How much simpler (and cheaper) it is to carry a small quantity of some sufficiently valuable and rare product, hidden in a much smaller cargo space — with a perfectly legitimate major cargo in the hold.

Consider, also, rare vintage wines or other products for the luxury trade. The Tokaj Eszencia wine that figured in one of the *Azhanti High Lightning* scenarios didn't come in lots of a ton, there were only 24 bottles of it. While this wine is admittedly the rarest of the rare, it is also true that most luxury items (the Eiswein of Zila, Jamaican Blue Mountain coffee from Terra, works of art, antiquities, and many other valuable potential cargoes) won't be transported by the ton, except on very infrequent occasions. Scarcity is one of the components of value, after all.

Finally, there will, be many cargoes that are neither forbidden nor rare, just not that large. For instance, house pets of an exotic nature might well be shipped from one world to another; they would be expensive, but no harder to obtain than a tropical bird or baby wallaby in a North American city today. But wallabys and cockatoos aren't shipped by the ton today, and their extraterrestrial equivalents probably won't be in the universe of **Traveller** either. Many other examples are equally plausible.

Why worry about small cargoes? There are several reasons. First, small cargoes, especially those considered luxury or restricted items, will have a value out of all proportion to their size. This will make them ideal for the typical adventuring band seeking ways of supplementing their income, particularly those engaged in regular interstellar commerce. Secondly, from a gaming point of view, it is possible to use these small cargoes, and the special conditions associated with each, to spark some

fascinating adventure situations. Restrictions on some cargoes make them two-edged swords — valuable, but risky, if the adventurers are caught smuggling. Others have very real physical dangers associated with them; and some particularly valuable ones will tend to attract attention from unsavory types such as thieves, pirates, other adventurers and similar riff-raff.

I is difficult to establish very hard-and-fast rules concerning small cargoes, for they will vary enormously in moist major areas from one planet to the next. Products that are a part of everyday life (perhaps even necessities of everyday life) on one world may be completely forbidden on another. The reason may not strictly relate to the law level of the planet (though this is part of it), cultural and religious taboos, traditions, racial differences (with non-humans, at least) and planetary economics will all play a part. This will have an impact on both the availability and the suitability of an item for sale on any given planet. Price often depends on these factors.

However, a referee can work out a simple system to develop potential small cargoes, and even include the means to generate quick adventure situations from them (generally these will be more in the nature of "campaign subplots" or distractions from the main flow of events). To do this, you must establish certain key things.

Type of Cargo: This takes a certain amount of thought, but isn't that hard. It is not practical to limit choice of cargo to items drawn from a specific list; use common sense, instead. Choose items that seem appealing and interesting, and build the rest from there.

Lots: The size of a small cargo is given in terms of "lot size;" i.e. a cargo might consist of 3 lots of 100 kg each, etc. The size of an individual lot is, again, rather open to the whim of the referee. No lot bigger than 100 kg should generally be allowed. One possibility would be to roll (2D − 2)x10 kgs; on a result of 0, roll 2D − 2 kgs; if *that* is 0, roll (2D − 2)x100 grams, and so on. Obviously, patently ridiculous rolls (say, 2 grams of wine, or 20 kgs of perfume) should be eliminated.

Value: Value is another nebulous area. For items which seem to be related to items on the trade and commerce table from **Traveller**, divide the base price figure given there by Cr1000. This will give the price per kilogram (rather than per ton) of the item. A few items, such as rare perfumes, for example, might have the price divided again, to yield a price per gram. For some variability, consider rolling on the actual value table with a DM + 1 to + 6, and take the resulting percentage of the actual value as the standard price for this particular small cargo.

Transport Price: This is the usual price charged by a starship to transport the item. A fair rule of thumb can be 5% of the value of the item, per jump. This is what player-characters receive when transporting small cargoes for others, and what they pay when speculating without a starship of their own.

Transport Cost: This would not be applied to very many cargoes; it mostly relates to living things, or occasionally to perishable items. Animals, for instance, must be fed, and put an added strain on life support systems. Transport cost should be derived by dividing the mass of the animal by 100, and multiplying the result by 1D/2 (retain fractions); this figure, in turn, is multiplied by Cr10 to get a cost to carry the animal awake. Low berth is much the same, except that the final multiplier is 1/2 instead of 10.

Perishable items are not so complicated, figure a flat cost of Cr1 per 100 kgs carried. Transport costs are important, since they show how much profit the characters can hope to make while

transporting them.

Market: Market determination is largely a matter of common sense, based on the nature of the cargo chosen, the value, etc. Generally, luxury items will be those with a base value of more than Cr100 per kilogram or so, but this can be pretty flexible.

Restricted Items: These can be defined a little more carefully. Restrictions can apply at either end of the voyage — it can be forbidden to import an item or to export it. Again, this will vary from world to world.

For each cargo, roll 2D – 7, giving a number between – 5 and + 5. This is the restriction modifier. When determining the market information, roll for export restrictions (2D plus the modifier compared against the world's law level; export is restricted if law level or less is rolled). Import restrictions at a destination world are determined in a similar fashion. Only the modifier remains constant; import and export restrictions change from world to world.

A restriction can mean anything from outright prohibition to the imposition of high tariffs on the item. To determine this, roll 2D; on 6 –, the item is prohibited entirely (the lower the number, the more severe the punishment). On a 7 + there is a duty on that item on that world; generally this is 10% on a 7, 20% on an 8, 30% on a 9, and so forth. Note that the mildest results fall in the middle of the table, with more severe reactions at either extreme.

Availability: The availability of the product is the next thing to be determined. Availability is the number or higher which must be rolled on two dice to locate this item for shipment off a given world. The absolute value of the modifier used in establishing restrictions is added to the roll of 2D, indicating basic availability. The availability roll may be modified by application of such skills as Streetwise, Carousing, Broker, and Trader, at the discretion of the referee.

Special Handling: The referee should note any special problems that may be associated with the cargo. This is, again, largely based on common sense. Perishables need refrigeration. Some wines are temporarily spoiled by vibration or sudden motion. Some animals may be too delicate to commit to low berth, and so on.

Adventures: As an optional addition, the referee should consider developing several possible adventure situations which center around that type of cargo. The ideal format for inflicting these adventures is that used in Supplement 6, *76 Patrons.* Set up a 1D roll to yield various possibilities. each time the cargo is carried, roll a die, and see what might happen on that trip. In this way, small cargoes have a three-fold use — they help give the characters an extra source of income; they give more background "color" to the campaign; they are a source of adventure in their own right.

Putting it all together: Ideally, the referee will want to develop ten or twenty different small cargoes over a period of time. As a normal part of the routine of checking cargoes, check once per week to see if a small cargo is available. Roll 8+ for this to happen. If player characters are actively seeking a small cargo, allow positive DMs for Streetwise and Broker skills.

The quantity of cargo available is small. Roll 2D – 1; this is the number of lots of the cargo available for shipment. The referee may wish to vary this in some instances.

If a cargo is prohibited on the world of export, the characters have been asked to commit a crime, and acceptance makes them liable to any penalties the local government may impose on smugglers. If it is merely restricted, all tariffs are taken care of by the shipper. Import

restrictions on the destination world, however, are the adventurers' problem; they should be aware of the destination world's laws, and be prepared to deal with them. Trade and speculation are handled somewhat differently. Here. of course, the adventurers are purchasing the cargo for sale elsewhere. The availability die roll and the normal trade and speculation rules come in here. If a cargo can be fit into any of the categories on the commerce table (liquor, gems, firearms, etc.), use all the given modifiers. If it does not, ignore the planetary trade classification. Regardless of this, there are certain new modifiers that should be used in the purchase and resale of small cargoes.

All items classed as "luxury" receive a +1 on Purchase DMs, and a +2 on Resale DMs. All items classed as "restricted" have a +5 DM for both purchase and resale. (Obviously, the thing to do in smuggling is to buy a thing where it is legal, and sell it where it is illegal.) The referee should permit other DMs to reflect local situations. Brokers may be used per usual rules, if desired.

EXAMPLES

Two small cargos are described below. These may be used as the starting point to a referee's personal collection of such descriptions.

Cargo: Denebian Flame Gems
Lots: 10 kg each
Value: Cr15,000 per lot
Transport Price: Cr750 per lot.
Transport Cost: None
Market: Luxury item. Restriction +3
Availability: 9+
Special Handling: None

Players' Information

Denebian flame gems are a brilliant blue-white gemstone mined in the asteroid belt of Deneb (Deneb 0000). They have few industrial applications, but are highly prized in the luxury market. Hard to find, and thus very expensive, Denebian flame gems command a high price almost anywhere.

Referee's Information

Roll 1 die.

1-2. The cargo of flame gems the characters take on proves to be flawed, and thus virtually worthless. This is unlikely to be noticed unless the cargo is examined by a character with Prospecting skill (roll 8+ to notice, DM +1 per skill level); others notice on a roll of 11+ (DM+1 for education 10+, +3 if the stones are examined by a jeweler). If a cargo aboard the players' ship, the flawed flame gems may convince the intended recipient that the player characters have ripped off the gems and substituted worthless ones instead.

3-4. A shipment of flame gems is always of some interest to hijackers. Roll 7+ for word of the shipment to have leaked out; if this happens a hijacking or other attack takes place in the course of the voyage.

5-6. No ill effects. The shipment poses no special problems.

Cargo: Blue Valonaise Wine
Lots: 5 kg each
Value: Cr50 per lot
Transport Price: Cr 5 per lot
Transport Cost: None
Market: Standard Item. Restriction −1.
Availability: 6+
Special Handling: Susceptible to motion and acceleration. Susceptible to Zero-G.

Players' Information

Grown in the Valonaise district of New Bretagne, Blue Valonaise is a light and delicate wine. It is not a particularly high-priced item, but has a solid value among

ordinary citizens who cannot afford many of the fancier wines. Exposure to acceleration or Zero-G, or rough handling of any kind, will render the wine undrinkable for a period of 1D weeks due to the distribution of sediments. If the roll was six, the wine is ruined entirely. The wine cannot be filtered, since many of the particles which give it its distinctive character are larger than the some of the sediments.

Referee's Information

1-2. In the course of a voyage, a breakdown of gravity or inertial nullification systems occurs. Any attempt to maneuver will disturb the wine on a roll of 6+ (DM − Pilot skill allowed); it is disturbed anyway on a roll of 8+, made once per hour. Other complications can be added as the referee sees fit.

3-6. The shipment poses no problems.

— John Marshal

---

vores native to Jesedipere in the Aramis subsector (change). Scattered to a number of worlds early in the human colonization of the region, Tree Lions can be found in subtropical forest regions on several worlds in the Aramis and Rhylanor subsectors.

A typical Tree Lion specimen appears as a small (1 kg), bilaterally symmetrical, 10 legged arachnid-like creature with a tough, leathery hide covered with britsle-like hairs. The foremost pair of legs have developed into two chitinous, shovel-like apparatus. The remaining legs are equipped with grippers adapted for hanging and climbing. All Tree Lions lead an arboreal existance, descending from their home trees only to build and maintain their unusual traps. A single home tree may support two to three Tree Lion nests, depending on the size of the tree. A typical nest will contain a male/female pair and several young, which are hatched from egg-sacs.

A Tree Lion will build its trap in the soil directly beneath its nest, utilizing its specially adapted forelegs to scoop out a shallow, conical pit about a meter in diameter. It will then spend several hours spinning a fine network of thick silken strands cross the interior of the pit. Each strand is coated with an adhesive substance which exhudes an odor of decaying meat. Small animals investigating the smell become trapped, and as they struggle, alert the Tree Lion via two "shroud lines" leading from the edge of the pit to the nest. Once alerted, the Tree Lion descends and administers a paralyzing bite. Prey is then wrapped in silk and carried to the nest.

Tree Lions do not normally pose a hazard to travellers, as their venom is relatively mild, but they can prove irritating and distracting. The creature's venom can cause temporary muscle paralysis in the affected limb (roll 2D for 8+) and can cause allergic reactions in some individuals (for bite subsequent to the first time a person is bitten by a Tree Lion, roll 12 exactly on 2D for allergic affect). The allergic reaction will reduce a victim's strength to zero for 1D days or until medical care is available. In areas of dense Tree Lion population, movement can be hindered by the presence of large numbers of pit traps.

—Daniel Perez

Animal	*Weight*	*Hits*	*Armor*	*Wounds & Weapons*		
Luuigir	3kg	4/7	None	3	See text	F8 A0 S1
Tree Lion	1kg	2/5	none	4	See text	A0 F8 S1

Adventures in Traveller: EXPLORATION

Traveller is a game of the imagination; it is considered desirable for referees to be able to transcend the bodies of published material available, creating original adventures for their players which, though they may draw upon published literature for ideas, are strictly the brainchildren of their creators. Trouble is, this doesn't always prove to be so easy. Perfectly brilliant referees may flounder helplessly when removed from a relatively narrow circle of expertise. And you cannot continue to replay the same generic type of adventure over and over again . . . your players will catch on sooner or later, get bored, and go back to Monopoly as a pastime.

In this series of Ref's Notes (which will continue on an irregular basis for as long as God and Mr. Wiseman — not necessarily in that order — will allow), I propose to discuss some of the elements that should go into good, well-conceived adventures. They are broken down into categories; this first article will address basics for those adventures built around exploration of the unknown.

There's an initial problem in dealing with this enormously popular science fiction theme in **Traveller**. The official universe makes little provision for exploration. The publication of Book 6, *Scouts* will do much to make the exploration of strange new worlds a reality, but let us face facts — the **Traveller** Imperium is a rather civilized place to adventure, surrounded by old and established cultures, with excellent records and extensive survey files to draw upon. You're going to have problems justifying a good, old-fashioned voyage into the unknown. Still, it isn't impossible. Read on.

Several alternatives allow you to attempt exploratory adventures using **Traveller**. The simplest is to do your adventuring outside the universe setting of **Traveller's** Imperium, but that's cheating. Anyway, if you do that, you can't take advantage of all the background material so painstakingly collected since **Traveller** first appeared. We will not elaborate on this option.

There are others, though, which can work your adventuring right into the context of **Traveller** and the Imperium. The two described below are typical.

FRONTIER EXPLORATION

There *are* frontiers in the Imperium.

They are not necessarily unexplored, but contact is sparse, and a lot of surprises can hide in an area cut off from mainstream contact for centuries. If you're in the Spinward Marches, for instance, explorations can be launched into the rimward and spinward frontier territories adjacent to the sector.

When dealing with this type of exploratory adventure, remember that there's probably going to be lots of signs of civilization out in these "frontier" regions. Human settlement extends as far as the Far Frontiers, two sectors to the spinward of the Marches; this region has contact with the Imperium on a fairly regular basis. It *isn't* the "great unknown."

But, exploratory missions can be planned even when areas are superficially settled. The best backdrop for such adventures is frequently to be found in a concept popularized in Poul Anderson's stories of the Polysotechnic League — *trade pioneering.* The adventurers are seeking out new life forms and new civilizations, not from any desire to split infinitives that have never been split before or travel beyond the realm of human experience, but rather out of a much more basic need — money. Corporations in search of new markets for their goods and services, new sources of raw materials, and so forth will finance new expeditions into these frontier regions.

Good examples can be found in Adventure 4, *Leviathan*, and in the *Night of Conquest* adventure from Double Adventure 6. Both are set against the background of trade pioneering. The areas they visit are inhabited (often by humans who have left Imperial space for one reason or another), but not *that* well-known. There is room for surprises, which are essential.

Obviously, this doesn't work everywhere. There's little scope for trade pioneering in the Solomani Rim or in the licensed portions of the Old Expanses. Their backgrounds don't permit the existence of regions within (or even adjacent) which are frontierish enough for this sort of adventure. The Spinward Marches, however, is excellent, as is Fasa's *Far Frontiers.* Reavers' Deep, just to coreward of Dark Nebula and setting of many of my own adventures (including *Night of Conquest)* was created with the trade pioneering/exploration adventure in mind. The same is true of most frontier areas of the Imperium.

HISTORICAL ADVENTURES

Another excellent option open to allow exploratory adventuring is available to those willing to step part of the way out of the **Traveller** universe. You can still use an awful lot of the material developed for the **Traveller** universe in doing so — just set the adventure in the "past" (that is, prior to the 1100s in which the published material takes place). If your adventurers are in the service of the Sylean Federation or some other small state towards the end of the Long Night, true exploratory adventures become a real possibility. The explorers may have a few old records of what it's like beyond the frontiers ... but, on a voyage of discovery, there is lots of room for surprises — lost colonies, other petty space-faring states, and so forth.

Just because everyone knows that the Sylean Federation will one day become the Third Imperium, there's no reason why the adventurers can't participate in some fascinating exploratory scenarios. Little enough is known about the exact course of events in the Long Night, and this allows many options and a wide latitude for the referee in creating and resolving situations.

Historical adventures can be set any time — from the early Vilani expansions to the Long Night to the early days of Im-

perial expansion into the Marches. In the latter case, especially, there's a great chance for a fresh approach to things. Use the Spinward Marches maps ... but the planets you find will be untamed, often uninhabited, and certainly far different from what veteran campaigners will be used to. Some guidelines to history are available in supplements such as *Library Data,* and in several of the **Traveller** boxed modules set in District 268.

CONSIDERATIONS

When setting up a campaign or adventure with an exploratory thrust, there are certain rather basic but critical points to be kept in mind.

First, of course, we're dealing with voyages into the *unknown.* Even if information is available on the region to be visited, it may be unreliable, outdated, or incomplete — "containing much that is apocryphal, or at least wildly inaccurate . . ." This being the case, the referee should not hand out data freely. When preparing a group for a venture into the unknown, give them the information you feel they need, but disguised as the report of an old survey or a rumor from a tramp merchant in a startown bar. Data will generally be correct in physical facts — presence or absence of gas giants; size, atmosphere, and hydrosphere; a reasonably accurate map of the subsector. It's hard to miss something as big as a star or a planet.

But populations, governments, law levels, technologies, political and cultural information, attitudes and behavior patterns of natives . . . all these can all change over the years. It's also easy for a visitor to land somewhere and mistake a local custom or activity for a planet-wide characteristic. That allows the referee to plant some startling surprises for the players to encounter.

For example, Double Adventure 6, *Night of Conquest,* presents a planet where the minor native race has shared their world with the militant descendants of a warship full of human refugees for centuries. These chaps have never been considered particularly important — until the day when they dropped out of the sky in dirigibles and gliders and started a difficult and dangerous adventure situation for a party of very surprised adventurers.

Adventure 4, *Leviathan,* presents a more sweeping adventure backdrop, with several stars on the map completely unknown to the players. Through special referee information, the booklet presents many possibilities for different adventures. The need to prepare both "official" and "player" information can be time-consuming and troublesome , but, in the end, well worth the investment in terms of enjoyment.

Just because an adventure is "exploratory," there is no need to limit things to primitive surroundings. Explorers reaching into the unknown are not barred from stumbling across reasonably advanced civilizations. To introduce super-powered cultures overshadowing the Imperium in technology or abilities would be contrary to the spirit of the **Traveller** universe (which doesn't stop *you* from doing it, just *us).* Planets of tech 10-16 are perfectly acceptable, as long as there's a good, well-considered reason for the technology (i.e., the Darrians) and remember that they cannot have invented jump-drive independently, strictly according to the **Traveller** universe. Within these limits, though, you can stage adventures which deal with high-tech or sophisticated cultures. Your adventurers needn't always be running from over-muscled cavemen.

Why should a group explore? Exscouts could be employed by the IISS to do survey work. Merchants may seek

out new markets, either for hire or on their own. A patron may charter an exploratory mission for any of a dozen good reasons. Deep-space exploration can arise from numerous situations, and offers a party of adventurers the action and danger — and money — they crave most.

It should be noted that an exploratory adventure need not involve space travel at all. The FASA "Sky Raiders" trilogy takes place in a settled and well-explored region, but two of the three adventures do involve exploration. A world need not be considered completely explored until tech level 8 or so. Until then, you can still find stretches of ill-explored territory (before Landsat, how well charted was the Congo Basin or the Tibetan Plateau on Earth) on many planets. *Legend of the Sky Raiders* explored a giant asteroid starship, lost for centuries. Neither of these required the characters to venture beyond the bounds of their sector.

In summary, the concept of exploration as an adventure background for **Traveller** can be viewed as a multi-layered set of different options. Once the basic backdrop has been selected, it is for the referee to choose specific adventure situations (from a wide range of possibilities) and implement them as desired. The specific adventures can involve survival, dealing with primitive cultures, meeting an uncontacted but not necessarily unsophisticated civilization, trade and speculation, politics, military matters . . . almost anything, in fact, commonly found in **Traveller**. But the added lure of the unknown adds a twist that isn't always open to adventures set within the Imperium. When dealing with the unknown, all the familiar routines go out the window; the adventurers must adapt to their new surroundings, or go under. And, in doing so, they get a chance to see **Traveller** at its best!

— *J. Andrew Keith*

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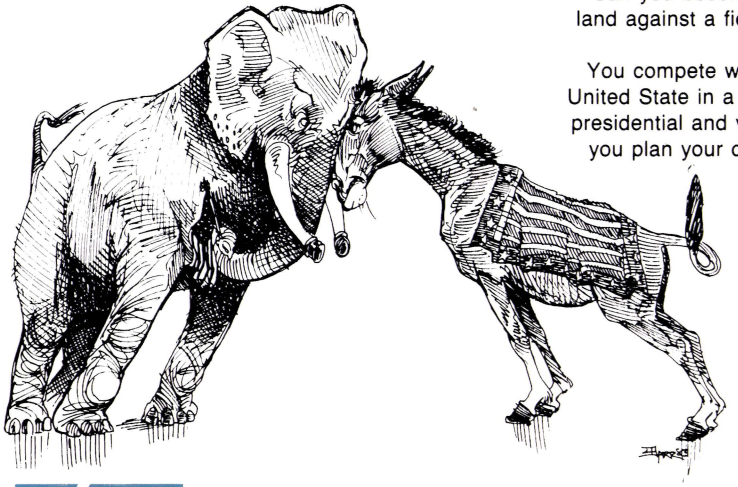

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